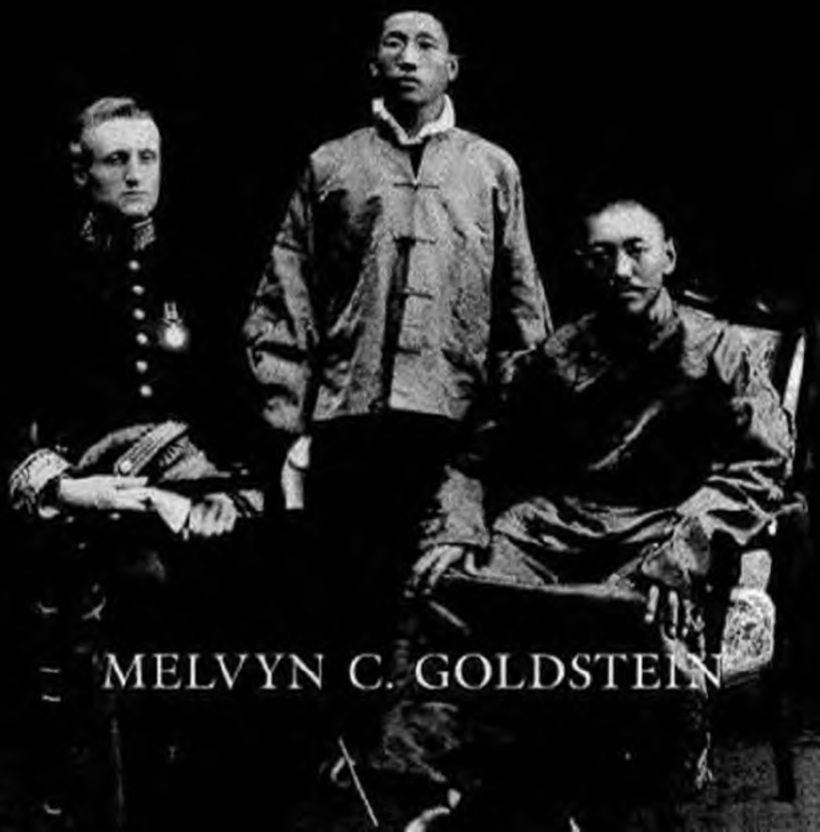
A HISTORY OF MODERN TIBET, 1913–1951

THE DEMISE OF THE LAMAIST STATE



MELVYN C. GOLDSTEIN

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with the help of Gelek Rimpoche

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This book is dedicated to
my parents, for all their help;

Professor André Lobanov-Rostovsky,
who first stimulated my interest in history and Asia;

Professor Turrell V. Wylie,
who nurtured my interest in Tibetan language, society, and history;

Surkhang Shape, Wangchen Gelek,
who led me through the intricacies of Tibetan politics and history;

and

André and Dechen,
so that they and others of their generation
may better understand the demise of the Lamaist State.

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I also want to express my gratitude to the National Endowment for the Humanities for two grants, nos. RO–20261–82 and RO–20886–85, and to the Smithsonian Institution for grant no. 20805900. These funds enabled me to obtain research leaves from my university and to travel extensively to interview former Tibetan and British officials. A research grant to study lexicography in Lhasa from the National Program for Advanced Study and Research in China (CSCPRC) gave me the opportunity to collect new articles on modern history and meet key

former officials. Throughout this project, Case Western Reserve University has afforded me strong support, agreeing to a series of leaves of absence and providing additional funding.

I am also fortunate to have had the help of a number of skilled editors, research assistants, and word-processing assistants: Trinley Dorje, Richard Givens, Lolette Kuby, Jane-Ellen Long, Karla Onest, Peter Rodis, Debra Vogel, and Cathy Zak. Last, but certainly not least, William McClung and his staff at the University of California Press have offered me sound advice.

Cleveland
April 1987

EXPLANATION OF ROMANIZATION AND ABBREVIATIONS

Tibetan written and spoken forms diverge considerably, for the written form contains consonant clusters that are not pronounced. For example, the written Tibetan word *bsgrubs* is actually pronounced "drub," and *rtsis dpon* is pronounced "tsipön."

Throughout the text of this book, the spoken (phonetic) pronunciation is used for Tibetan terms with the proper Tibetan spellings (romanization) given in the List of Correct Tibetan Spellings. Phonetic renderings of the terms are italicized. In the footnotes, the following conventions are used. References to an article or book written in Tibetan cite the author's name in romanization, following the system of T. V. Wylie (1959). References to an interview with a Tibetan official use the phonetic rendering of his name; the list of interviews in the References section is given in alphabetical order by phonetic spelling, with the romanized version in parentheses following the phonetic.

Because it is usually impossible for non-Tibetan speakers to perceive the relationship between the spoken and written renderings, if the author's name also occurs in the text, the phonetic form is given in parentheses after the romanization in the footnotes and References.

The phonetic renderings of Tibetan names used in the narrative have been standardized, but the Tibetan names and terms cited in quotations

vary considerably; for example, Dzongpön is spelled in some quotations as Jongpoen, and Tashilhunpo as Tashi-Lhunpo.

In the References, Tibetan names are listed with the family name first, followed by a comma and the personal name. For example, in "Bya ngos pa (Changöba), Rdo rje dngos grub," the family name is "Bya ngos pa (Changöba)" and the personal name is "Rdo rje dngos grub." Since not all Tibetans have family names, this distinction does not appear in all citations.

A number of abbreviations are used repeatedly in the text and in the documents cited:

cld = could
congen = consul-general
cpr = Chinese People's Republic
cro = Commonwealth Relations Office
emb = embassy
fo = Foreign Office
fol = following
fyi = for your information
gen = general
goi = Government of India
hmg = His Majesty's Government
ior = India Office Records
ltrs = Letters
mea = Ministry of External Affairs
mil = Military
msg = message
oss = Office of Strategic Services
pla = People's Liberation Army
pls = please
qte = quote
reftel = referenced telegram
rep = Representative
rpt = repeat
rs = rupee
shld = should
sm = same as
unqte = unquote
ur = Your
usfr = United States Foreign Relations
wld = would

PREFACE

In 1912–1913, the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Tibet from exile in India (see Map 1). His ragtag volunteer force expelled all Chinese officials and troops from Tibet, reestablished his rule, and began a thirty-nine-year period in which Tibet held total control over its own internal and external affairs. China never accepted this state of affairs, and the Republican and Kuomintang governments worked to restore Chinese control. They were unsuccessful, however, and when Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan in 1949, the Tibetan government alone still controlled Tibet.

The new People's Republic of China continued the Kuomintang's Tibet policy and set as an immediate goal the reintegration of Tibet with the "motherland." In October 1950 it launched military offensives which quickly defeated the Tibetan forces, and in May 1951 the Tibetan government, under the authority of the sixteen-year-old 14th Dalai Lama, signed the now-controversial Seventeen Point Agreement, in which Tibet for the first time in its long history formally accepted Chinese sovereignty, albeit with regional autonomy.

Two diametrically opposing views of Tibet's political status vis-à-vis China have dominated both the popular and the scholarly literature. The pro-Tibetan school argues that Tibet had been an independent state conquered by the Chinese Communists and was wrongly incorporated into the Chinese state. The pro-Chinese school sees Tibet as a traditional part of China which split from it, as a consequence of British machinations, after the fall of the Manchu dynasty but which was

rightly reunited with China in 1951. In both schools, impartiality often takes third place to polemical oratory and political expedience, with selected international events used in isolation to substantiate one position or the other.

This book is neither pro-Chinese nor pro-Tibetan in the current senses of those terms. It does not set out to support the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile or to support the People's Republic of China. Rather, it attempts to explicate a dramatic historical event: the demise, in 1951, of the de facto independent Lamaist State. It examines what happened and why, and it balances the traditional focus on international relations with an emphasis on the intricate web of internal affairs and events, for although external forces precipitated the demise of the Lamaist State, internal forces created the conditions under which these external forces could prevail.

Part One focuses on the period following the 13th Dalai Lama's death in 1933, although it selectively examines important earlier events in the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama, when Tibet threw off the Manchu hegemony and attained de facto independent status. Part Two deals with the Taktra Regency of 1941–1950 and the last year of the Lamaist State under the 14th Dalai Lama.

It is difficult not to feel great sympathy for the hardships that both the Tibetan and the Chinese people have experienced in modern times. In a real sense, it is for them that this book was written. I hope to provide a fresh view of modern Tibetan history and thereby enable them to evaluate the past from a perspective no longer obscured by current political expediency.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The highly politicized nature of Tibetan history makes valuable a thorough exposition of the sources on which this study is based. The four major sources of data were: (1) oral interviews and discussions with former Tibetan officials and others involved in particular historical events; (2) firsthand accounts (written in Tibetan, Chinese, and English) by former Tibetan, Indian, and Chinese officials; (3) the extensive diplomatic and political archival records of the British Government

of India, the United Kingdom, and the United States; and (4) newspapers, books, and articles, some of which include primary political materials.

Oral Historical Data

Oral history—the collection of primary historical data by interviewing eyewitnesses concerning some period or event—can provide invaluable information, particularly where government records are not available. Oral historical research, however, is not without problems. Memory is often selective, participants' accounts are sometimes self-serving, and current political issues can affect the quantity and quality of the accounts. Consequently, such accounts must be evaluated carefully in terms of the background of the informant and checked against other interviews and archival sources when available.

I conducted extensive interviews with former Tibetan officials, monastic leaders, soldiers, traders, and so forth, including both those who fled Tibet in 1959 and now reside in India and the West, and those who remained in Tibet. These interviews provided a critical window into the internal dynamics of Tibetan history and the Tibetan perception of events. They were conducted over a thirty-six-month period during the years 1983–1985. Seventy-nine Tibetans and one former British diplomat who had been stationed in Lhasa were interviewed. Of these, thirty-five were government officials and their families, twenty-four were monastic figures, four were soldiers, and sixteen were others such as Khambas. The References section contains a list of these interviews, with their locations.

Most interviews were tape-recorded in Tibetan, then transcribed into Tibetan orthography, and finally translated into English. Since some of these interviews filled as many as ten two-hour cassette tapes, the Tibetan and English records of these interviews comprise a large corpus of data.

The oral historical interview phase of the project was organized in three stages. (1) An initial set of interviews with two senior officials covered the entire period of this history. This allowed expansion of an itial "event list" for the period and the development of a comprehen-

sive sequence of events that Tibetans themselves had specified as important. (2) Selected individuals who were known or suspected to have knowledge about specific events or series of events were interviewed. These interviews were attempts to determine the key experiences of each subject and to examine these experiences in detail. (3) Follow-up interviews were held after the initial interview material had been translated, digested, and compared with other accounts. These reinterviews (and re-reinterviews) cleared up inconsistencies and answered new questions arising from other interviews or from the British and British colonial archival materials.

All the initial interviews in India were conducted by Gelek Rimpoche, my research associate and the director of the project staff in India; follow-up interviews were usually done jointly by myself and Gelek. I conducted all interviews in Tibet. Throughout these interviews, subjects were questioned concerning Tibetan history, regularly asked about the sources of their information, often presented with contradictory information which they were asked to explain, and always encouraged to explain why events occurred as they did. Information was also elicited regarding the relevant kinship and political relations of the interviewees.

Intense political pressures and the inherent problem of self-serving accounts complicated the interviewing. A number of Tibetan former officials in India (mainly former monk officials) worried that this history would present the old system and government in a bad light or would hurt the cause of future Tibetan independence. As one official put it in Tibetan, they were anxious not to "throw dirt in their own faces." A few of these officials refused to cooperate, saying there was no point in digging up old history; some refused to speak frankly; still others tried to glorify their own roles. However, virtually all individuals cooperated to some extent and, by and large, their accounts were illuminating.

One factor that helped restrict the quantity of blatant political pap was that former Tibetan officials knew from the outset that I was well versed in the modern period. I speak Tibetan, have compiled a huge collection of political songs ridiculing the misdeeds of Tibetan government officials during the modern era, and had worked closely with the late Surkhang Wangchen Gelek, one of Tibet's four shapes (ministers)

during most of the period of this study. In fact, most Tibetan officials erroneously thought that I might have a copy of the massive history of Tibet which the late Surkhang is said to have written (but which has never been found), or at least that I had had access to it. These factors worked to counteract the tendency of former Tibetan officials to sanitize accounts for naive foreigners.

When we collected contradictory versions of important events, we were forced to weigh these in accordance with: (1) our understanding of how the traditional system operated; (2) other accounts; (3) the source of the informants' information (hearsay or firsthand); (4) the relationship of the informant to the event—for example, whether he was a relative or ally of the figures in the event; and (5) the informant's reputation for duplicity or honesty. On many important issues a decision had to be made regarding which version to accept, and we spent a great deal of time trying to clarify issues by conducting reinterviews and interviews with new individuals. Although alternative explanations of incidents are sometimes presented, usually in footnotes, this was not always possible or desirable.

Eyewitness Written Accounts

The new liberalization in China has resulted in branches of the Political Consultative Congress soliciting and publishing eyewitness accounts of past history. These comprise a data source not previously available to scholars. In Lhasa an Office of Cultural and Historical Materials was created under the auspices of that congress, and former officials were paid to write accounts (in Tibetan) of their experiences. These accounts are contained in nine volumes published between 1982 and 1986, each about 300 pages long. These volumes primarily contain articles written by Tibetans, but there are also some important articles written by former Chinese officials and translated into Tibetan. These volumes are classified as "restricted circulation" (or *neibu*) and are generally available only to upper-level cadres. This results in an impressive frankness. For example, when discussing a meeting in 1946 in Nanking which Tibetans attended to secure Chinese recognition of their de facto independence, a Lhasa account did not say, as in the past, that the Ti-

betans went as Chinese delegates, but, rather, said that they went to the meeting with the "empty hope" of showing their independence. These published materials have also made a number of the seamier aspects of modern Tibetan history a matter of public knowledge, thus allowing our Tibetan subjects in India to discuss these issues without fear of later being accused of having dug up old dirt.

In India, several histories written by important officials (e.g., Khe smad [1982], Zhwa sgab pa [1976], Shan kha ba [MS.], and Thub bstan sangs rgyas) have also appeared or are about to appear. Although not all of these accounts were available for study (the Tibetan refugee government withheld several important manuscripts written by former officials), these Tibetan-language materials provided invaluable data, often from officials who are now dead.

A number of other participant accounts written by British, American, and Indian officials and missionaries were also utilized.

Government Records and Documents

Archival materials relating to Tibet are contained in the India Office Record and Archive and in the Public Record Office, London. These comprise a massive collection of letters, telegrams, notes, minutes, reports, and so forth of the British and Indian governments, including many from the Tibetan and Chinese governments. From 1937 on there were monthly and then weekly accounts from the British Mission in Lhasa. The total collection provides an invaluable balance to the oral historical and written accounts.

The United States National Archives contain an important collection of U.S. State Department materials dealing with Tibet from 1942 to 1952, including copies of Chinese, Tibetan, British, and British Indian materials. Although the State Department refuses to release many documents from that period, the available materials provided critical data, particularly for the period between 1949 and 1952.

The government of India has not made available any of its records for the 1913–1952 period, but a large corpus of its records was found in the India Office and the Public Records Office in London, where

they had been sent when India was a colony. These files also include some post-independence materials for 1949–1951.

Tibetan and Indian Newspapers

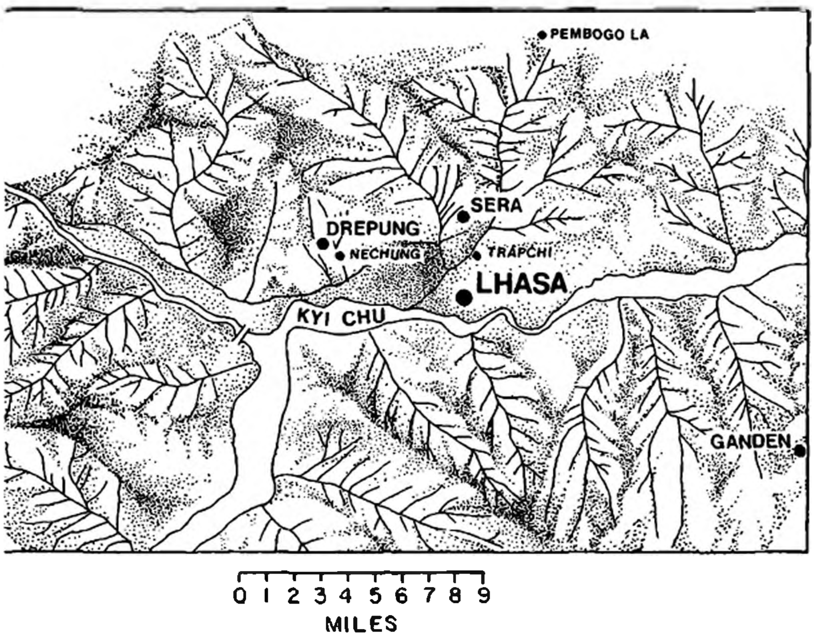
Tibet had no newspapers during the period under study, but a small Tibetan newspaper called the *Tibetan Mirror* was published in Kalimpong, India. Individual copies of this paper were collected in India, and a large collection of them was obtained from Yale University's Benicke Library. The India Office has a magnificent collection of English-language Indian newspapers which were very helpful, particularly for the post–World War II period.

In conclusion, much, if not most, of the primary information on which this study is based has never been used before. In total, it provides a level of detail and understanding not heretofore attainable.



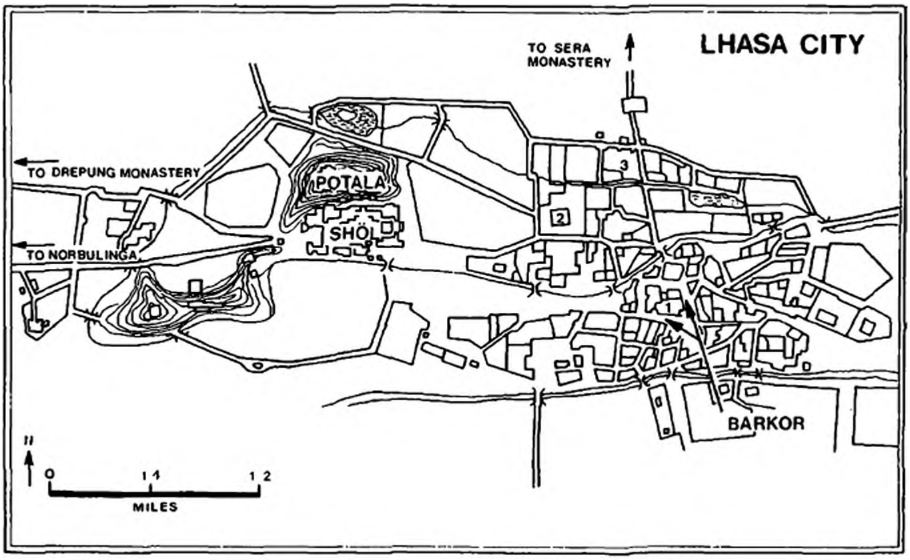
1.

Tibet in relation to Asia



2.

The Lhasa valley



3.

Lhasa city, ca. 1935

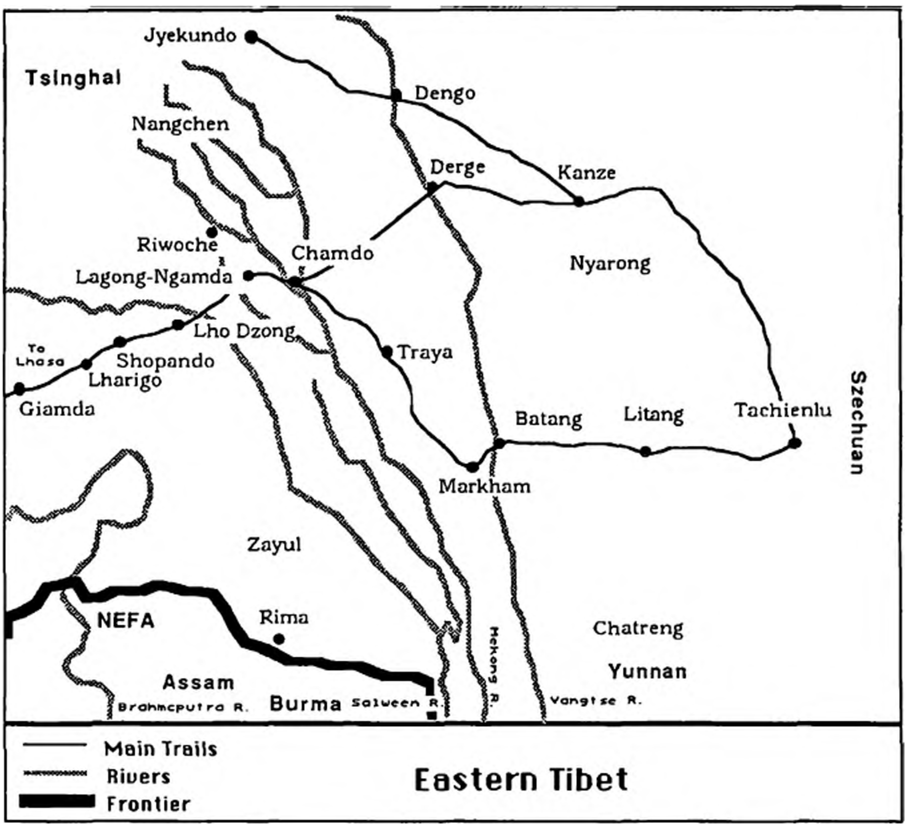
KEY

1. Tsuglagang (Jokang) Temple
2. Reting Labrang (Shide)
3. Upper Tantric College


SINKIANG
TSINGHAI
Amdo
(Kokonor)
TIBET
NEPAL
TSANG
SZECHUAN
BHUTAN
INDIA
ASSAM

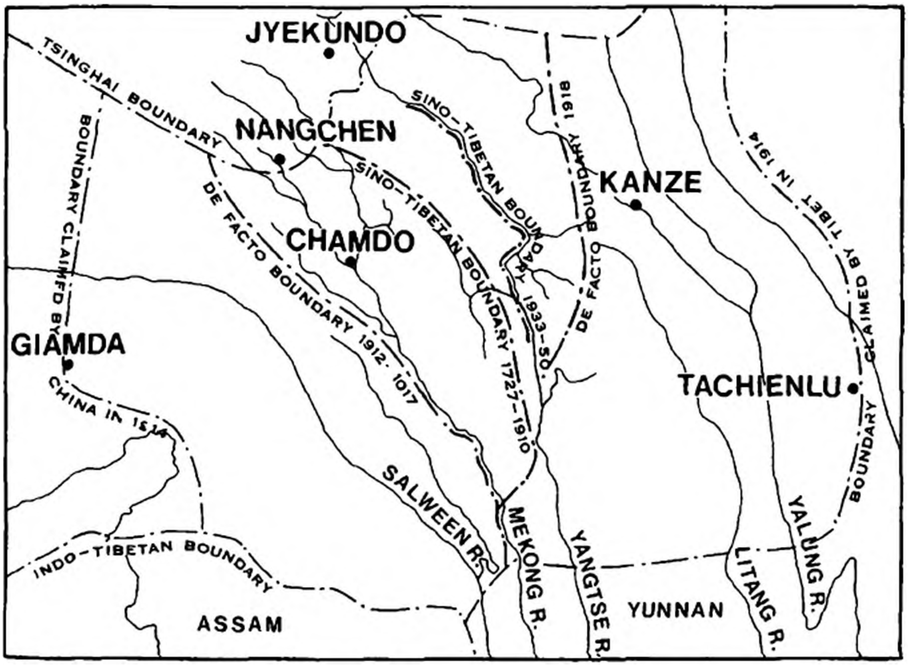
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Tibet



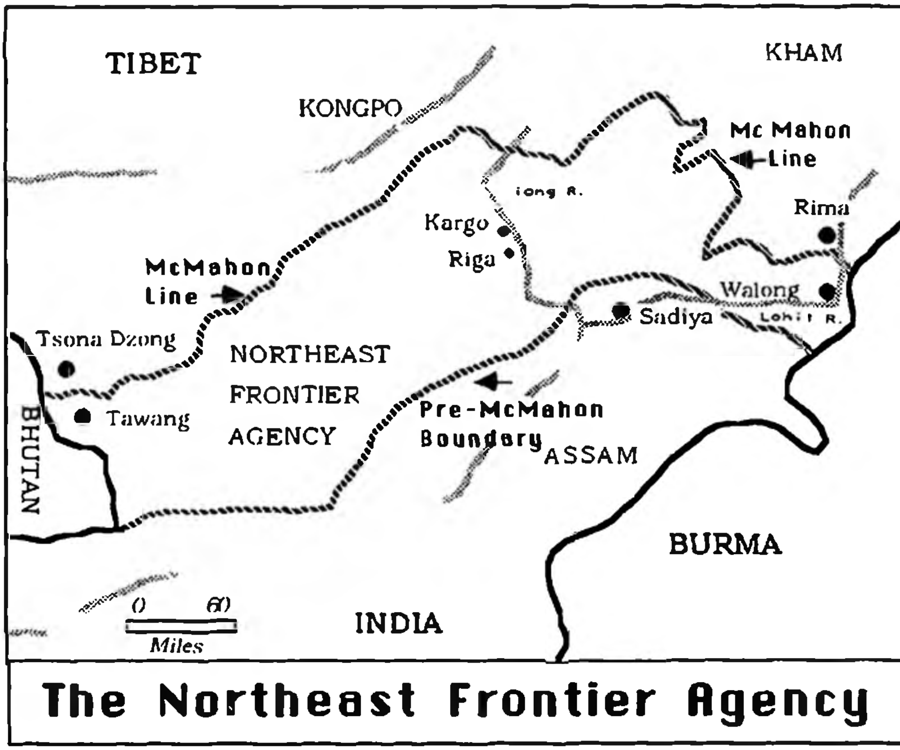
5.

Eastern Tibet (Kham)



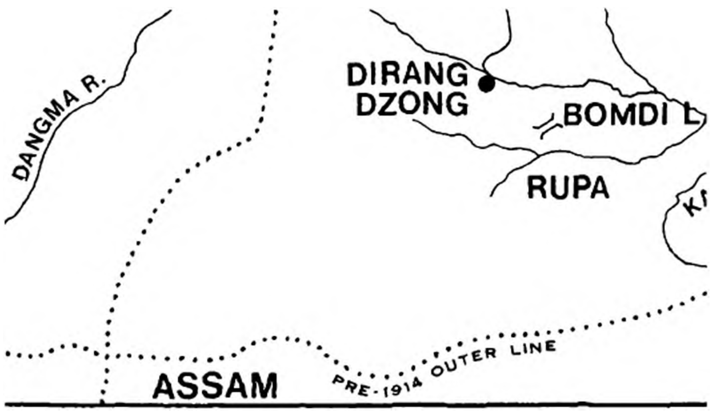
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The Simla Convention boundaries



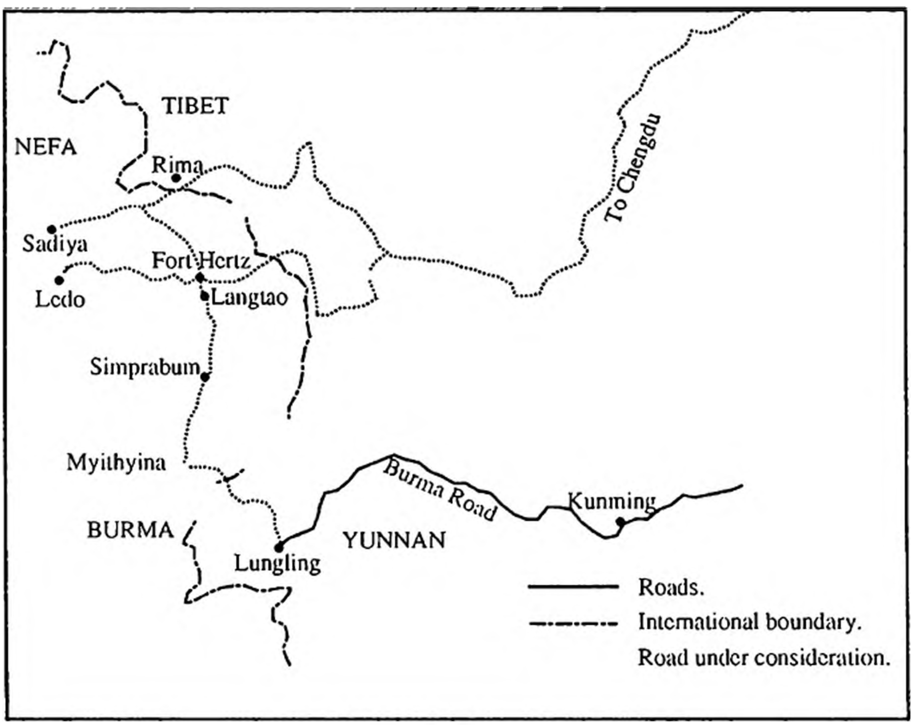
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The Northeast Frontier Agency



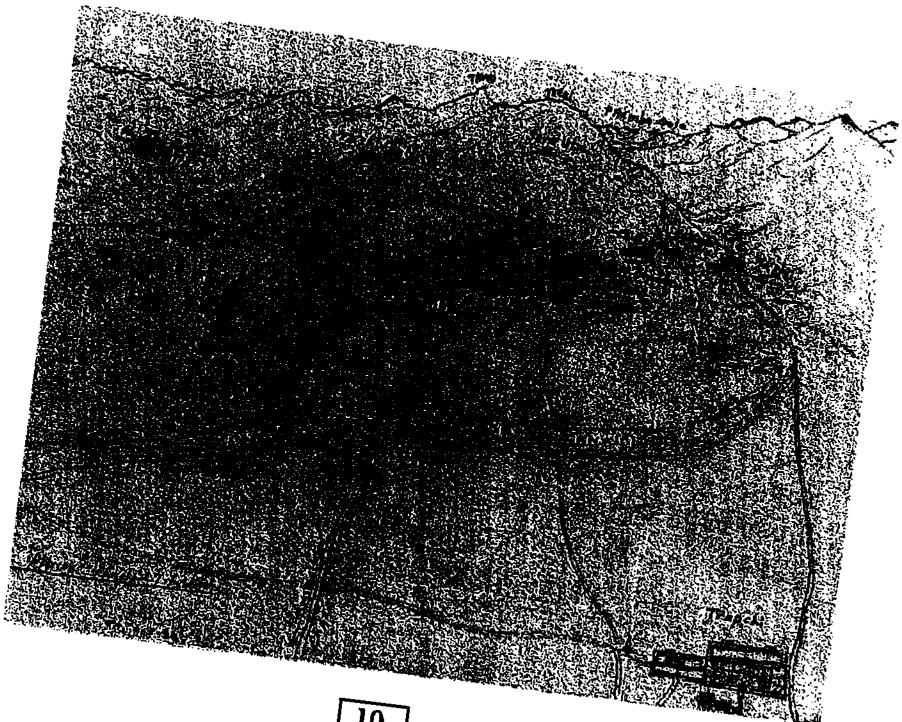
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The Tawang area



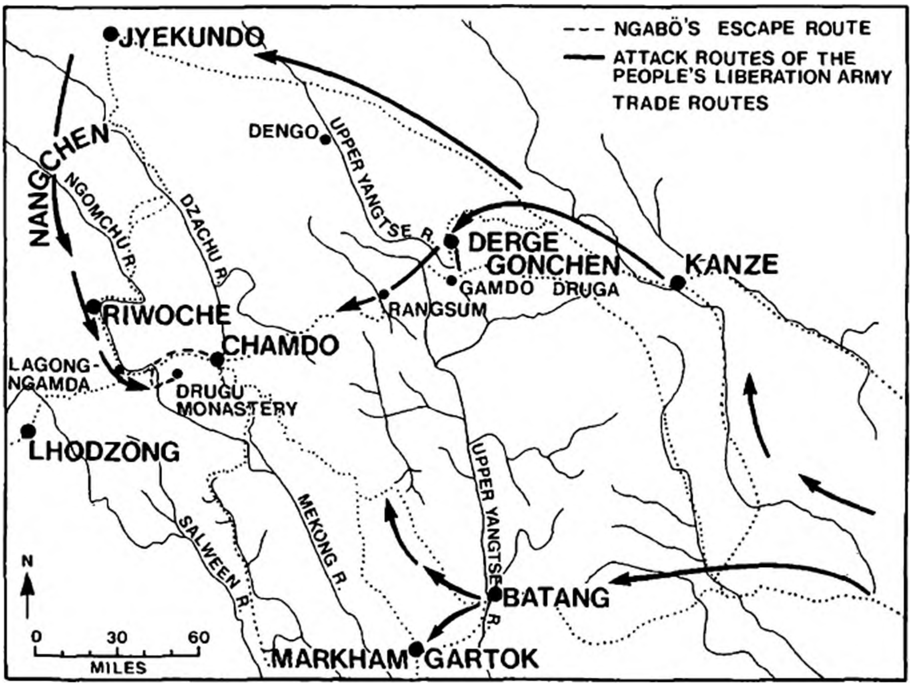
9.

Proposed roads from India to China



10.

Sketch map of Sera monastery and environs



11.

Attack routes of the People's Liberation Army in Kham

INTRODUCTION: TIBETAN SOCIETY, 1913–1951

The Gelugpa or Yellow Hat sect of the Dalai Lamas was a group of reformists dedicated to cleaning up abuses in the Tibetan monastic system.[1] Emphasizing celibacy and scholasticism as prerequisites to more advanced tantric studies and practices and seeing themselves as returning to "pure" Buddhism, they had the fervor and deep commitment of fundamentalists. This placed them in conflict with the older and then dominant Red Hat sects, which advocated "instantaneous" practices to attain enlightenment and were less concerned with celibacy and study. The Gelugpa, in turn, viewed these Red Hat practices as corruptions and debasements.

The most powerful of the Red Hat sects, the Karmapa, and their patron, the king of Tsang, strove to retard the spread of the Gelugpa sect. In response, the 5th Dalai Lama enlisted the army of Gushri Khan, his Qoshot Mongol patron, to defend his sect and unify the country under his rule. After a brief war the Tsang king was defeated, and in 1642 the 5th Dalai Lama became the ruler of Tibet.[2] He set out to

1. *Gelugpa* literally means "the ones of the virtuous path." It is known as the Yellow Hat sect because, in contrast to all other sects, which wear red hats, its monks wear yellow hats.

2. The 5th Dalai Lama was a Gelugpa-sect incarnate lama. (The Tibetan practice of recognizing incarnations began with the Karmapa sect in the thirteenth century A.D.) Before he acquired political power, the Dalai Lama's incarnation line was generally known in Drepung monastery as Simkangwaw. The title of Dalai Lama, first given to

create a perfect environment for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism in general and for the Gelugpa sect in particular.[3] He established a number of new monasteries and reorganized the economic support system for others by giving many large Gelugpa monasteries manorial estates with serfs.[4] The early Gelugpa government also formally established the optimum number of monks for some monasteries and gave these monasteries the right to conscript children from their serfs if they fell short of this number. Similarly, it established government subsidies in such commodities as barley, butter, and tea for monasteries without large estates, and it set up regular funding for numerous major ritual prayer ceremonies.[5]

The government expressed its religious ideology with the term *chösi nyitrel,* which translates as "religion and political affairs joined together." The monks of the three key Gelugpa monasteries located around Lhasa—Drepung, Sera, and Ganden—expressed this in the saying, "Ganden Photrang [the Tibetan government] is the head of the religion and the patron of the religion."[6] This commitment to Tibet as a religious state and to the universality of religion as the core metaphor of Tibetan national identity will be seen in later chapters to be a major factor underlying Tibet's inability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Sonam Gyatso in the fifteenth-century by the Mongol chief Altan Khan, is a mixture of Mongolian and Tibetan: *Dalai* means "ocean" in Mongolian, and *Lama* means "spiritual master" in Tibetan. Although Sonam Gyatso was the first Dalai Lama to be recognized as an incarnation, he is known as the 3rd Dalai Lama because two previous Gelugpa masters were posthumously declared Dalai Lamas.

3. The Gelugpa orientation of the new government is seen in a land-tenure document for Kalung estate (handwritten copy of original document) given to the 9th Dalai Lama's family in the Water-Horse year (1822) by the Demo Regent. The introduction says: "By the order of the great Emperor Manjushri [the Manchu Emperor of China], I, Genden Sherige Thushashin Badarkol Husamati Pakshi Huthukto Nomihan Regent of Tibet, am in charge of civil administration and of upholding the Yellow Hat sect's religious doctrine." (*'Jam dbyangs gong ma chen po'i bka'i lung gis / bod kyi las don khur 'dzin zhwa ser bstan pa 'dzin byed dga' ldan she re ge thu sha jin ni bha dar kol hu sa ma ti pak shi ho thog thu rgyal tshab.*)

4. His own monastery, Drepung, received the lion's share of these estates. It was also given control of Lhasa during the twenty-one days of the Great Prayer Festival (Mönlam Chemo) held during the first Tibetan month.

5. Dung dkar (Dunggar) 1983: 104.

6. In Tibetan: *bstan pa chos sbyin gyi mnga' bdag/ gzhung dga' ldan pho brang pa chen mo* (Gelek [Rimpoche], interview). Ganden Photrang was the residence of the Dalai Lamas in Drepung monastery until the 5th Dalai Lama assumed political power and built a magnificent new palace, the Potala, in Lhasa (see Figure 6).

THE MANORIAL ESTATE AND SERFDOM, 1913–1951

The two types of economically productive landholdings in Tibet were manorial estates held by lay aristocrats, monasteries, and incarnate lamas, and land directly held by the government. The majority of the country's land and people were organized into manorial estates: recent Chinese accounts state that they accounted for 62 percent of the total arable land, 37 percent in the form of religious estates and 25 percent in aristocratic estates.[7]

Manorial estates were hereditary and, as in Europe, the main source of wealth. They consisted of arable land and a "bound" labor force of serfs obligated to farm it. Tibetan manorial estates consisted of two distinct sections: demesne fields, constituting about one-half to three-fourths of an estate's arable land, from which the lord received the total yield; and the remaining fields, from which the serfs derived their subsistence. The serfs' primary function was to cultivate the lord's demesne fields. They did all the agricultural work on these fields, at the times specified by the estate lord. They received no wages and, generally, no food from the lord on the days they worked. The lord, however, provided seed and, in most cases, plow animals. Serfs were also responsible for such other tasks as repairing the lord's house, transporting his crops, and collecting his firewood. They also often had to make some payments in kind. Some serfs, moreover, were selected in childhood for lifetime labor obligations as soldiers, monks, nuns, or house servants.[8]

In Tibetan social theory, serfs were obliged to provide this free labor because they held a *treten* ("tax base"), consisting of their hereditary tenement fields. They had complete control over these fields with the exception of the power of sale. They planted what and when they wanted, and they retained the entire harvest. They could also lease their fields to others. Within any given estate, the tax a serf was obligated to pay was specified in written documents. The total labor and tax obliga-

7. Epstein 1983: 406. The late Surkhang Shape estimated that monastic and lay estates accounted for slightly more than 50 percent of the total land including Kham (eastern Tibet), and for a greater percentage of Central Tibet. Epstein's figure is derived from official figures exhibited in Lhasa.

8. House serfs (servants) did not have their own land base but were supplied with food and clothes by the lord.

tion of a family of serfs was normally proportional to the percentage of the tenement fields it held. For example, in the Nyare valley east of Sera monastery, a woman we will call Pema grew up as a serf of Sera monastery. Her family had to pay taxes on two tax bases, one directly from the monastery and the other from the central government. They were a wealthy family with landholdings (42 *ke* of land) larger than those currently held by families in Nyare.[9] Pema's family tax obligations were substantial. They had to send one worker virtually every day to work on their lord's demesne fields or to do other tasks such as carrying manure. In addition, they had to provide a second laborer during the period from the sixth day of the Tibetan seventh month to the twentieth day of the Tibetan twelfth month, and then another worker in autumn for sixty-one days. They also had to supply a special type of cookie when the monks of Sera went on their annual retreat for sixteen days in the seventh month, and perform the difficult corvée transportation obligation.

The transportation corvée was one of the backbones of the central government's administration of the country. Tibet was divided into major routes which were subdivided into stations (*satsig*), each of which was located one half-day's walk from the next to insure that peasants in one area would be able to make a round trip to the next station in a single day. The system operated simply. The central government issued permits (*lamyik*) authorizing the holder to demand transportation and riding animals, often numbering in the hundreds, from the serfs upon presentation of the permit at a station. Holders of these permits could also obtain shelter and food either free or at minimal cost.[10] This system enabled the government to move people and goods effectively throughout its vast territory at no expense to itself and with no need to employ officials in villages throughout the countryside. Providing animals and accommodations on demand was one of the most difficult labor obligations for serfs, because the permit holder could arrive at a station as late as the afternoon before the animals were required. This made it necessary for the serfs to maintain sizable numbers of carrying animals

9. A *ke* is a standard Tibetan volume measure, equivalent to about 33 pounds of barley.
10. Surkhang, interview.

in their houses rather than in distant pasture areas.[11] In turn, this meant that they had to grow or purchase enormous quantities of fodder for these animals.

Tibetan serfs, however, were not necessarily downtrodden, and some serfs, such as Pema's family, held substantial amounts of land and were quite affluent. They might well have their own "hereditary" servants and numerous tenants who provided agricultural labor in return for the lease of some of their fields. The Tibetan serf system also had a category of landless serfs who could live and work away from their estate, although they were still tied to their lord, to whom they paid an annual fee called *mibo* ("human lease").[12]

Serfdom was the foundation for the manorial estate system and for the political and monastic system. It was an efficient system of economic exploitation that guaranteed to the country's religious and secular elites a permanent and secure labor force to cultivate their landholdings without burdening them either with any direct day-to-day responsibility for the serfs' subsistence or with the need to compete for labor in a market context.

The Tibetan serf-based system also delegated substantial government rights to the lords. As a consequence, the government maintained no police or magistrate force in the rural areas, and district commissioners intervened in local disputes only when one of the parties brought the case before them. The serf-estate system therefore greatly reduced the need for a complex and elaborate structure of government and relieved the government of the necessity of generating large revenues for the salaries of lay officials and for maintaining a vast monastic complex in which as many as 15 to 20 percent of the males were monks.[13] It is not surprising, therefore, that at the height of its power, during the period 1913–1951, there were only 400 to 500 fully gazetteered lay and monk officials administering a country that contained at least

11. Animals such as yaks, mules, and horses were normally kept in mountain pasture areas several days' distance from the village.

12. For detailed discussion of human-lease serfs see Goldstein 1971, and Goldstein, 1986.

13. Surkhang (interview) said that a government survey conducted in the 1950s revealed a total of about 90,000 monks in Tibet, and the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences mentioned a 1950s survey reporting 2,700 monasteries and 120,000 monks (Pawang, interview). It is not clear whether these refer to the same survey.

one million inhabitants in an area that was almost as large as Western Europe.[14]

This, however, does not imply that the central government did not exercise authority over the entire country; it did.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Lay Officials

The government was administered by lay and monk officials. Lay officials were normally recruited from the estate-holding, hereditary, lay aristocracy, which consisted of about 150 to 200 families. These were differentiated internally into a small group of about 30 higher-status families, known as Depön Mitra, and about 120 to 170 lower or "common" aristocratic families. The higher-status aristocrats were generally wealthier and held multiple estates, whereas "common" aristocrats generally possessed only a single estate.[15]

Although the aristocracy was hereditary, families were occasionally added to their ranks; for example, the family of each new Dalai Lama was ennobled. This mobility, however, did not threaten the integrity of the aristocracy, since the newly ennobled families received estates and serfs and inevitably developed the same interests as the older aristocracy.

The generic name for a government official, *shungshab* ("servant of the government"), reflects the subordination of the aristocracy to the government. Each aristocratic family had to provide one male from the family to serve as a government official; the government could confiscate its estates for disloyalty, dereliction of duty, or failure to provide an official. On the other hand, it would be overly simplistic to view these officials simply as employees and their estates as salary-estates. Estates

14. Epstein (1983: 407) cites a figure of 616: 333 monk officials and 283 lay officials. The Tibetan government had theoretically fixed the number of officials at 175 each, for a total of 350, but there was no real attempt to maintain that limit in the modern period (Surkhang, interview). The Epstein figure appears to represent the total in the very late 1950s, when many new officials were inducted.

15. Although not all estates required provision of a government official, every aristocratic family had one that did, known as *shabten phashi,* "the estate that is the base of [government] service."

were hereditary, and their size was not tied to the importance of an official's position; the largest estate-holding family might be represented by only a very junior official; and many families held estates for which they were not required to provide an official. The aristocracy, therefore, had a somewhat ambivalent status. They were not an autonomous landholding elite, nor were they merely employees of the government. Though clearly subordinate to the government, they saw themselves as an hereditary elite. They valued their government service highly and jealously guarded what, from their point of view, was a monopoly over the lay positions in the government.

The process by which aristocrats became government officials reveals this ambivalence: it was really controlled by the bureaucracy of the lay aristocracy, and not, despite outward appearances, by the ruler. To enroll a son as a government official, an aristocratic family had to educate the son either in one of the private schools in Lhasa or at home with private tutors. Since good handwriting was a major requisite of government service, the basic education consisted mainly of learning to write the various Tibetan scripts properly.

After this, the family registered the son as a "student" in the Tsigang Office (Revenue Office), usually at about age fourteen. Such "students" underwent a loosely organized training program in which they studied subjects such as fractions and *diu,* the Tibetan method of making arithmetic calculations.[16] After this training, Tsigang "students" could be nominated for appointment as full government officials.

This nomination was in the hands of the Tsigang and Kashag, the two highest offices in charge of lay officials. Three times a year they nominated three or four "students" to present samples of their handwriting to the ruler (i.e., the Dalai Lama or the regent), who then selected two for appointment.[17] Although the ruler made the final choice, his power was mitigated because he was not given the entire list of Tsigang "students" to choose from. Also, although he could delay the appointment, he could not permanently prevent the son of an aristocratic family from entering the service without "denobling" the fam-

16. This training could also be done privately, in which case the boy would be given a test by the Tsigang.
17. This was known as the *mibab jenshu.*

ily itself or showing some unusual cause. The striking characteristic of the lay bureaucracy, then, was that while it was theoretically subordinate to the government, to a large extent it controlled its own recruitment.

Monk Officials

The origin of the appointment of monks as officials appears to date back to the founding of the Gelugpa government, when the 5th Dalai Lama created sixteen positions to be filled by monks.[18] As government activities expanded over the years, particularly in the twentieth century, the government chose to enlarge the number of monk officials rather than create more aristocrats, so that at the time of the demise of the traditional Tibetan state there were several hundred monk officials who controlled religious and monastic affairs and played important roles in the administration of secular affairs.

Although they were required to be celibate, monk officials differed considerably from other monks in outlook, training, and comportment. They may be appropriately called "token monks," since most of them had merely been registered in one of the big Gelugpa monasteries without actually having lived and studied there.[19] One night's stay in a monastery was sufficient to have one's name registered in its rolls and thereby achieve eligibility for entering the ranks of the monk officials. In general, most monk officials resided no more than a few weeks in their monasteries. Consequently, these monk officials did not have the intense loyalties and ties to the monastery and monastic college that typified regular monks.

Most commonly, monk officials were either the sons of the Lhasa middle class or members of the families of existing monk officials. These *shagtsang* families were the functional equivalent of lay families in that they owned property, had internal organization in the person of a household head, and had domiciles where the members lived. They

18. Surkhang, interview.

19. The eligible Gelugpa monasteries were Sera, Drepung, Ganden, Riwa Dechen, Pho Lamrim, Riwo Chöling, Ganden Chökor, Tshetshog, Namdra, and Nechung (Surkhang, interview).

were usually well-to-do and sometimes possessed estates acquired in past generations. They differed, however, from lay families in one essential respect: since monk officials were celibate, these households were perpetuated not by procreation but by adoption, usually of a close relative such as a brother's or a sister's son, but not uncommonly an unrelated boy. The head of the shagtsang supported and educated such a boy and ultimately procured a government position for his "disciple," as these wards were called in Tibetan. These boys were made full members of the family and inherited all the family's property when the household head died.

A small number of aristocratic families, such as Tregang, Rong Namse, Möndrong, and Rong Pelhün, were required to provide a monk official for government service. Furthermore, aristocratic families sometimes voluntarily enrolled a second son in that service.

A third method of monk-official recruitment, known as *traja*, involved the conscription of special levies of bright young monks from the monasteries. These young monks were brought to Lhasa and educated by the office in charge of monk officials, the Yigtsang Office. However, during the 1913–1951 period, middle-class and shagtsang families so eagerly competed for the monk official positions that conscription was largely unnecessary. And even when the *traja* mechanism *was* utilized in 1933 and 1940, it was completely monopolized by shagtsang and middle-class boys who had been enrolled as monks specifically to qualify for the *traja*.

Like lay officials, monk officials basically controlled their own recruitment. A candidate needed an existing monk official (called his teacher) to sponsor his entry. This teacher was generally the head of the young candidate's shagtsang. In the modern period, this was so important that some parents with no monk-official relatives arranged for another shagtsang head to sponsor their son. In such cases it was not unusual for them to sign a contract guaranteeing that their son would make no claims on the wealth of the nominal teacher's shagtsang. The boy's teacher would then submit his name and handwriting sample to the Yigtsang Office, which maintained a comprehensive list of all such applicants. From this list, the Yigtsang's four officials decided how many candidates to present to the ruler each year and then selected and ranked these. Both the comprehensive list and the Yigtsang's nominees

were then presented to the higher-ranking monk official, the *Chigyab khembo,* and they would discuss the matter until a final recommendation was reached. These candidates then presented their handwriting to the ruler in person just as the lay nominees did, and the ruler made the final choice.[20] Again, the ruler did not have the complete list of Yigtsang Office "students" to choose from.

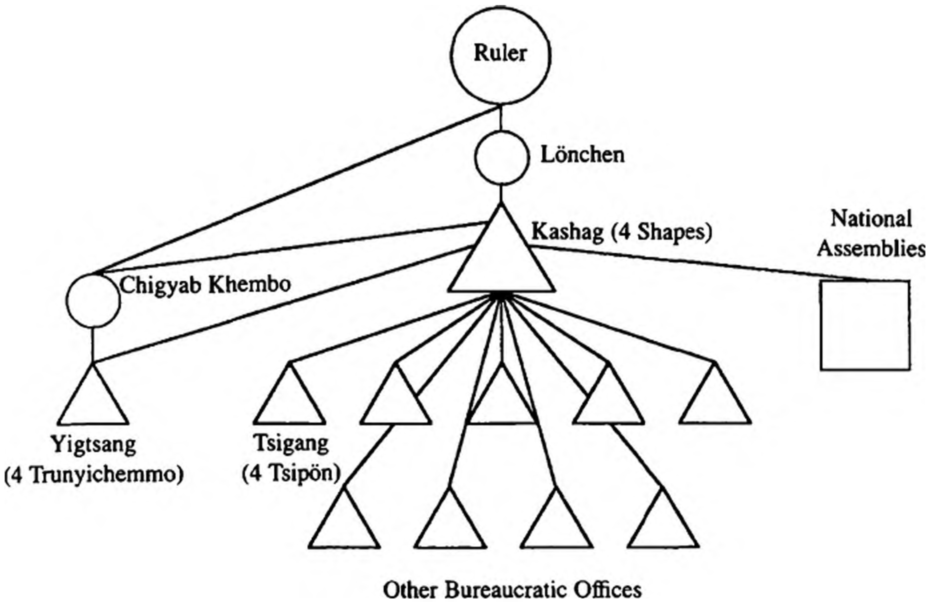
Monk officials, therefore, cannot be considered to have been representatives of the Gelugpa monasteries. While some had close ties with monasteries, by and large they did not have the intense loyalties that ordinary monks had, and the monastic leadership did not perceive them as true monks or consider them completely reliable. H. E. Richardson, the British official who headed the Lhasa Mission for many years in the 1930s and 1940s, aptly expressed this: "Although they acted as the watchdogs of the Church in the civil administration they seemed to fall between two stools and were often viewed with some suspicion by the main body of monks."[21] Monk officials also differed from lay officials in that they depended on income from their government positions rather than hereditary estates. Consequently they tended to see themselves as the true upholders of the interests of the government vis-à-vis the estate-holders.

Structure of Government

Tibet was organized as a simple bureaucracy, in that: (1) in the hierarchy of offices and positions, each had a reasonably clearly delimited sphere of activity (see Figure 1); (2) recruitment was based on qualifications which were measured by a limited system of examinations of handwriting and appearance; (3) the system of internal promotions was theoretically based on ability; (4) written records were used extensively; and (5) disciplinary action was taken if responsibilities were not fulfilled or rules were disobeyed.

20. Unlike the lay official service, where appointment as a full official was routine, there was considerable competition in the monk service for nomination as a full monk official. Consequently, the households of the candidates generally recruited support by giving gifts of varying value to one or more of the five officials mentioned above.

21. Richardson 1984: 24.



1.

Structure of the Tibetan government

At the head of this set of offices and positions was the Dalai Lama. He had ultimate authority over all decisions and appointments and, theoretically, all recommendations for action had to be submitted to him for approval. The Dalai Lamas are believed to be incarnations of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Avalokiteśvara's essence long ago emanated into a male fetus, which then became the manifestation of that deity on earth: the Dalai Lama. When a Dalai Lama dies, the deity's essence is believed to be freed from the physical body and once again, after one or two years, to emanate into a fetus. Thus, incarnation as a principle of succession results in an inevitable period when the Dalai Lama is a minor and a regent rules in his place.

The nature of the regency has varied during different historical periods of the Gelugpa State. During the twentieth century, regents were incarnate lamas selected to rule by the National Assembly. In theory, the regent's authority was the same as that of the Dalai Lama, but since regents ruled by selection rather than divine inheritance, they were more vulnerable and usually less able or willing to rule as autocratically

as could a strong Dalai Lama. The fact that they were always affiliated with one or another of the great monasteries around Lhasa and, further, with one of the colleges within that monastery fostered rivalries and also worked against their commanding the broad loyalty held by a Dalai Lama.[22]

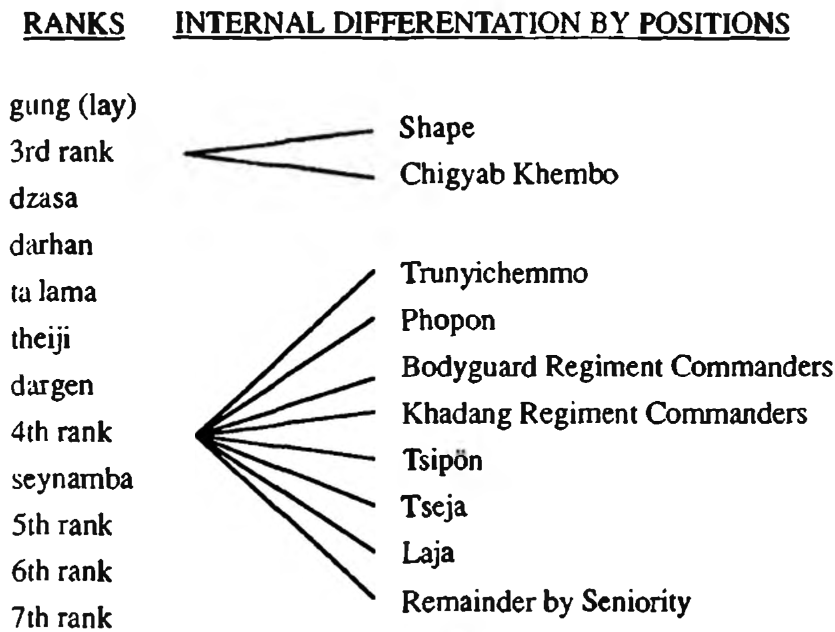
Another important, but not permanent, position in the government was that of the *lönchen* (or *silön*), often translated as "prime minister" in English, but not really an equivalent title. In the period covered by this study, it was first used when the 13th Dalai Lama appointed three officials to rule jointly while he was in exile in Mongolia.[23] After the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet in 1913, their power was greatly diminished and their main function became that of transmitting lay officials' recommendations to the Dalai Lama. In 1933, when the 13th Dalai Lama died, only one lönchen remained, and after he resigned in 1939, the position was not used until the 14th Dalai Lama fled Lhasa in December 1950.

Beneath the Dalai Lama and lönchen were the offices of the Tibetan government. These varied in composition and function, each being headed by a fixed number of officials and a fixed ratio of monk to lay officials if they included both. There was also a hierarchical system of ranks into which all offices and positions fitted. Some of these ranks were numerical—for example, the fourth rank—while others bore names such as *dzasa* or *khenche*. Figure 2 illustrates this for the third and fourth ranks. This ranking system was displayed in deference behavior, particularly in seating and marching arrangements at state processions and government ceremonies. The ranking system itself, however, did not involve political power, and many high ranks, such as *darhan* and *khenche,* had no duties or offices attached to them. Officials of these sinecure ranks could be appointed to real offices, but then it was clearly the actual position that gave political power, not the rank.

No position in the government required special training, even that of army commander. Promotions were theoretically based on ability,

22. Older regents with only a few years to live, however, were often as autocratic as a strong Dalai Lama.

23. They were Shatra, Sholkang, and Changkhyim.



2.

Ranks and positions in the Tibetan government

but it was common for hopefuls to attempt to recruit support among those controlling the appointment process by giving gifts. Although a few offices and positions such as the district commissioners had fixed terms, the majority, particularly the higher ones such as the Kashag, Yigtsang, and Tsigang, had none, their incumbents remaining until they were either promoted or demoted, or retired or died. Promotion to one of the highest offices, therefore, was tantamount to obtaining the position for life.

The highest government office beneath the regent and lönchen was the Kashag. During most of the period of this history it consisted of four *shapes,* three of whom were lay officials and one a monk official. The monk shape was always formally treated as the senior member, but this was merely ceremonial. New shapes were appointed by the ruler on the recommendation of the Kashag, which submitted a ranked list of

four to five nominees. The ruler could ignore this list, but he generally chose one of the recommended candidates. The four shapes had equal authority, and all decision making was done by consensus.

The Kashag was the administrative center of the Tibetan government. It ultimately received all secular information—requests, telegrams, and the like—sorted them, and then sent each item to the appropriate office or official for examination. It was often referred to as the throat between the head (the ruler) and the body (the other secular offices). It could decide which requests to respond to (either by acting itself or by sending the request to the ruler) and could alter recommendations from lower offices. No secular matter could reach the ruler without going through the Kashag, and the Kashag's seal was required for most formal orders of the government. In addition, it normally initiated surveys, investigations, and new policies and submitted recommendations for promotions and demotions for lay officials to the ruler.

The Kashag's recommendations to the ruler were written in the form of a final implementation order which gave the ruler internal choices, including the final option of accepting or rejecting the order as a whole. To illustrate this, the late Surkhang Shape composed a hypothetical recommendation that went from the Tsigang Office to the Kashag, to the Dalai Lama, then back to the Kashag. Since the higher offices each used a different-colored ink, it was always clear to the reader who had added what comments. When lengthy additions were made, these were written on a separate piece of paper and glued at one edge, over the original proposal but in such a way that it could be uncovered. The following example conveys this by using capital letters for the additions by the Kashag and italics and strike-throughs for the ruler's choices.

> It was examined [by the Dalai Lama]) on the fifth day of the ninth month of the Wood-Tiger year.
>
> Wood-Tiger year. A report has arrived from Gyantse district. This year because of heavy rains, the people of Samada's fields have become covered with water and they were not able to harvest a crop. Based on the great difficulties caused by that, WHICH OTHERS HAVE NO MEANS FOR IMITATING, after doing their corvée taxes, for 3, 4, 5 years we are requesting a concession of taxes in kind. ~~AND ON TOP OF THAT~~, ~~TO MAKE UP FOR THE LOSS~~, ~~SILVER COINS 200~~, ~~250~~,

~~300~~, AND BARLEY *KE 70*, ~~80~~, ~~90~~, TO BE GIVEN AS A GIFT. Please instruct if it is *all right* or not to do this.

Thus, the Tsigang recommended that the Samada people should be given a concession of their taxes in kind for either three, four, or five years. The Kashag added a gift from the government with an option of 200, 250, or 300 silver coins, and an option of seventy, eighty, or ninety *ke* of barley. The Dalai Lama approved five years for the tax-in-kind concession and approved a gift of 70 *ke* of barley, but rejected giving the village coins.

The Kashag, however, did not necessarily present all recommendations to the ruler before sending them for implementation. The ruler had to approve decisions regarding the expenditure of government funds, the transfer of land from one owner to another, permanent tax exemptions (*chayang*), promotions and demotions, and border and foreign relations, but most other topics were settled by the Kashag.[24] The late Surkhang Shape estimated that in a normal six-day work week (during the mid-1940s) about one hundred pieces of business (30 percent of the total) were sent to the ruler for final confirmation. The remainder were settled by the Kashag, which wrote the recommendation as if it had been seen by the ruler. This was possible because the Kashag's seal functioned as the official government seal. The percentage of items settled by the Kashag increased considerably during rule by a regent and decreased or vanished during the period of a strong Dalai Lama such as the 13th.

The dominant power of the Kashag, then, stemmed from several sources. It was the only office that could send secular items to the ruler for approval and the only secular office that could have direct contact with the ruler. By virtue of its gatekeeper position, it could also block transmission of requests, petitions, or recommendations simply by not acting on them. Moreover, because it was also the repository of government records and edicts, it could and did attack enemies by, for example, locating and collecting old debts or by passing information to

24. Although all decisions theoretically had to be sent to the ruler, many types of cases were decided by the Kashag under the convenient fiction that they were too minor to be worth bothering the ruler about.

friends—for example, that X's land-tenure document for an estate was dubious—and thus encouraging litigation.

The power of the Kashag was counterbalanced by its lack of authority both over the monk officials and over affairs dealing with religion and the monastic system. These were controlled by the chigyab khembo and the Yigtsang Office. The chigyab khembo was the ranking monk official. He was in charge of the entire staff of the Dalai Lama and stood between the Yigtsang and the ruler. On all important issues the Yigtsang had to take their recommendations to him before sending them on to the ruler, and the chigyab khembo had the right to alter them. In issues of national importance, he was normally invited by the Kashag to meet jointly with them before a recommendation to the ruler was made.[25] The Yigtsang was headed by four monk officials known as *trunyichemmo*. It functioned like the Kashag for religious and monastic issues, making recommendations via the chigyab khembo to the ruler. The stature of the Yigtsang also derived from its control of the process of appointments and promotions of monk officials. If an office needed a monk official, the Yigtsang prepared a list of four or five nominees and, after consulting with the chigyab khembo, sent it to the ruler. The Yigtsang also had an important function as one-half of the committee that chaired National Assembly meetings.

The most powerful lay office beneath the Kashag was the Tsigang. Although often translated as the Finance Office, it did not make fiscal policy for the country, nor was it responsible for Tibet's currency. Its main function was to keep accounts and oversee tax revenue from estates, and it was sometimes called on to investigate important disputes over land tenure and taxes. It was also a stepping-stone to promotion to the Kashag. It was headed by four fourth-rank officials known as *tsipöns,* who were the other half of the committee that chaired the National Assembly.

Twenty-odd other offices, such as the Mint and the Foreign Office, made up the government of Tibet.

25. Michael (1982: 54–55) is incorrect in his placement of the chigyab khembo above the shapes in his "Chart of Tibetan Polity." Not only did the chigyab khembo come below the shapes in official processions, but he unquestionably had less authority and power over secular matters than did the shapes. With regard to secular affairs, the Kashag was clearly dominant.

Promotions, Power, and Competition

The division within the aristocracy between the high-status and the common families had important consequences for political competition. The high-status, wealthy families tended to seek positions that had or led to power and influence, while the poorer, common aristocratic families (and monk officials) tended to seek positions that offered potential for making income. The significance of this emerges when we examine the composition of the two most important positions in the government, the shapes (of the Kashag) and the chigyab khembo, during the period 1900 to 1959.

Of the forty-one shapes during these fifty-nine years, twelve were monk officials and twenty-nine were lay officials. Of the lay officials, 72 percent were from high-status aristocratic families. Of the remaining 28 percent, half were from very rich, common aristocratic families. Therefore, 86 percent of the lay shapes were either from the high-status families or from lower-status but very rich families. Of the remaining shapes, only one was actually from a poor family. Of the twelve monk-official shapes, 33 percent were from aristocratic families and 33 percent from wealthy shagtsang families.

Six of the ten chigyab khembos in this century were monk officials from aristocratic families; three were from the big shagtsang families; and only one was from a lower socioeconomic background.[26]

Thus, the holders of large estates, along with the rich shagtsang families, dominated the important bureaucratic positions. The lack of adequate salary, the frequent necessity of large gifts to secure the higher positions, and also the greater expenses (such as ceremonial responsibilities and the need to maintain a large house in Lhasa) required by higher positions made it difficult for the poorer aristocrats to compete for high positions such as shape. While monk officials had lower ceremonial expenses, the same factors were generally applicable.

Another facet of the competition for power involved the ruler, whose theoretically absolute power was not necessarily attainable. When a new ruler took office he inherited incumbents entrenched in the highest offices of the bureaucracy. As time progressed, however, the

26. Surkhang, interview.

new ruler asserted his authority by demoting "difficult" incumbents and appointing his own supporters,[27] and by establishing around himself a network of favorites who played an enormous role in Tibetan politics. These favorites afforded the ruler sources of information and opinions that were independent of the formal bureaucratic network. Unlike the ranking government officials, they could be counted on to work for the ruler's interests, since their position was totally dependent on him. Both laymen (often servants) and monks could be favorites.

In addition to such favorites, there was an informal category of officials favored by the ruler. These "followers" supported the ruler and were rewarded with choice positions and promotions. In some cases, individuals in this category could have as much influence with the ruler as the nongovernmental favorites.

The opposite of this in-group was the category of persons out of favor with the ruler. Its members were either actually discriminated against or felt that they might be discriminated against. Generally, these persons waited either for an opportunity to move back into favor with the ruler or until one of the periodic shifts of Dalai Lama and regent occurred. Officials who were actively competing for power and influence but failed often fell into the out-group.

Between these two extremes were the majority of the bureaucratic officials. They stood on more or less neutral ground in the competition for political influence. They were more interested in winning the lower bureaucratic posts and improving their economic situation than in gaining the higher political posts with their attendant dangers. Although it was hard to move up onto the favorite/followers' level, it was all too easy to move downward to the out-group, this downward movement usually being accompanied by loss of the manorial estate. Fear of losing their estates was the key to the conservative comportment of the majority of lay officials. Even monk officials, who generally did not have hereditary estates, tended to act conservatively in order to protect their positions and those of their families. These officials had no ideo-

27. Since government officials could be demoted or dismissed only for some misdeed, the ruler had to wait for either natural vacancies or breaches in behavior. Nevertheless, if the ruler remained in office for any length of time he could generally fill a majority of the crucial offices.

logical commitment other than self-preservation and tended therefore to bend readily with the political breezes.

The National Assembly

The National Assembly appears to have arisen during the 1860s when the lay aristocrat Shatra convened an ad hoc body that called itself "the great Ganden Monastery, Drepung Monastery, and the government officials" (Gandredrungche). It deposed the Regent (Reting)[28] and replaced him with Shatra. After Shatra's death the assembly, or Tshongdu, as it came to be called, selected the regents and came to play an important role in national affairs. In the modern period (1913–1951), there were three types of assemblies, all of which met irregularly at the request of the Kashag to consider and give opinions on specific questions supplied to it by the Kashag.

The smallest of the assemblies was a standing committee consisting of the four heads of the Yigtsang (the four trunyichemmo) and the four heads of the Tsigang Office (the four tsipön). Called the Eight Trunyichemmo and Tsipöns (Trungtsigye), it was usually convened by the Kashag to widen the base of support for a proposal to be presented to the ruler.

The larger of the other two assemblies is called the Full National Assembly (Tshongdu Gyentsom), but this is somewhat misleading since it was not at all national in its makeup. It consisted of: (1) all the abbots and ex-abbots of the three major Gelugpa monasteries, Ganden, Sera, and Drepung; (2) the Trungtsigye; (3) all the lay and monk officials present in Lhasa at the time; (4) representatives from a number of incarnations and monasteries such as Reting, Kundeling, Tshomöling, Tshechöling, Ditru, Tashilhunpo, the Ganden Thri Rimpoche, and Sakya; (5) the captains (*rupön*) and lieutenants (*gyagpön*) of the army who were stationed in Lhasa; (6) the approximately twenty minor offi-

28. Sera monastery was not involved since Reting was from Sera and they supported him.

cials (*tshopa*) who were in charge of collecting house taxes and arranging corvée taxes in Lhasa;[29] and (7) about 30 clerks (*drungtog*).

Like the Trungtsigye, the Tshongdu Gyentsom was convened by the Kashag. However, the Kashag did not attend its meetings, which were presided over by the Trungtsigye, one of whom opened the meeting by reading the topic to be discussed. Since votes were not taken, the final decision was generally reached when one of the Trungtsigye summed up the feelings expressed by the members. If there were no dissenting views, a draft was written, and if there were no objections to the wording of this, it would be taken by the Trungtsigye to the Kashag. If the Kashag disagreed or had questions, the assembly discussed these and generally rewrote the draft. In the end, four seals were affixed to the assembly's documents: one representing all the government officials, and one for each of the three great Gelugpa monasteries.[30]

The full National Assembly, however, rarely remained in session for more than a day or two, normally adjourning in favor of the third main type of assembly, the Abbreviated National Assembly (Tshongdu Hragdu). This consisted of between twenty and fifty members: the abbots and ex-abbots of the three major Gelugpa monasteries and several government officials chosen by the Kashag and the Yigtsang to represent the various governmental ranks. This Abbreviated National Assembly was the type of assembly usually convened. It used the same seals as the full National Assembly and operated in the same manner.

None of these assemblies could initiate action, nor could they ultimately determine administrative action. Whether or not their advice was heeded and converted into policy depended on the Kashag and the ruler. The assemblies, in short, were consultative bodies which represented primarily the monks of Sera, Drepung, and Ganden and the mass of government officials. As will be seen, the influence and power of these three monasteries gave their representatives a kind of veto power in the assembly.

29. The responsibility for this work was delegated to three aristocratic families on an hereditary basis and to another twenty or so families on a nonhereditary basis. Of these twenty, most were wealthy traders who owned property in Lhasa.

30. The government official's seal was known as the *chidam*. Sera and Drepung used the seal of their Lachi committees and Ganden's representatives used their own seal.

THE MONASTIC SYSTEM

It is impossible to understand either the operation of the Tibetan political process or the events of modern Tibetan history without exploring briefly the nature of the monastic system and in particular the structure and organization of Drepung, Sera, and Ganden monasteries.

Monasticism is fundamental to both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhist philosophies and is found wherever Buddhism exists. However, the Tibetan form of monasticism differed from other forms in important ways. For one thing, the Tibetan monastic system adhered to a mass monk ideology, supporting a staggering number of monks. Surveys showed that there were 97,528 monks in Central Tibet and Kham in 1694, and 319,270 monks in 1733.[31] Assuming a population in these areas in 1733 of about 2.5 million, about 13 percent of the total population and about 26 percent of the males were monks. The magnitude of this can be appreciated by comparing it with Thailand, another prominent Buddhist society, where only about 1–2 percent of the total number of males were monks.[32] Tibetans believed that monks per se were superior to laymen and that the state should foster both religion and the spiritual development of the country by making monkhood available to the largest possible number. Monasticism in Tibet, therefore, was not the otherworldly domain of a minute elite but a mass phenomenon.

The Tibetan monastic system was also unusual in that the overwhelming majority of monks were placed in monasteries by their parents when they were between the ages of seven and ten, without particular regard to their personality or wishes, and because becoming a monk was a lifelong commitment, not a temporary undertaking. There were many reasons why parents might make a son a monk. For some, it was their deep religious belief that being a monk was a great privilege and honor. For others, it was a culturally valued way to reduce the number of mouths to feed, whlie also insuring that their son would never have to experience the hardships of village life. In some cases the

31. Dung dkar (Dunggar) 1983: 109.
32. Tambiah 1976: 266–67.

son helped support the family by sharing the money distributions (*gye*) that monks received throughout the year. These monks, derogatorily known as "disciples of their mothers," lived and worked at home and only went to the monastery when they heard there was a money distribution.[33] Again, sometimes parents made a son a monk to fulfill a solemn promise made to a deity when the son was very ill. In yet other cases, recruitment was simply the result of a corvée tax obligation: monastic serfs with three sons often had to make one a monk.[34]

Parents sometimes broached the subject with a son but usually simply told the child of their decision. The monastery officially asked the young boy whether he wanted to be a monk, but this was really pro forma: if, for example, a newly made child monk ran away from the monastery, this would not result in his dismissal on the grounds that he did not want to be a monk. A number of monks related that they had run away to their home after a few months' initial stay in the monastery, only to receive a beating from their father, who immediately returned them to the monastery. The monks relating these incidents did not see this as abusive. Rather, they laughed at how stupid they had been at that time to want to give up being a monk. Tibetans feel that young boys cannot comprehend how wonderful being a monk is, and that it is up to their elders to see to it that they have the right opportunities. In any case, children seven or eight years of age are too young to comprehend the significance of lifelong celibate monkhood and make informed decisions.

The expectation was that the boy, once accepted, would remain a monk for his entire life. However, since a monk did have the right to leave, powerful mechanisms were needed to retain young monks facing a life of celibacy. The monastic system was structured to facilitate this: a monk enjoyed high status, but an ex-monk was looked down upon. The monastery did not place severe restrictions on comportment or expect educational achievement, and even illiterate monks were accommodated. Rather than diligently weeding out all novices who seemed unsuited for a rigorous life of prayer, study, and meditation, the Tibetan monastic system expelled monks only if they committed murder or en-

33. In spoken Tibetan, *to lempa amey gitru* ("mother's disciple for getting food").
34. In Tibetan this is expressed as *phusum pharwa* ("the middle of three sons").

gaged in heterosexual intercourse.[35] Moreover, there were no exams that novices or monks had to pass in order to remain in the monastery (although there were exams for higher statuses within the monks' ranks). Monks who had no interest in studying or meditating were as welcome as the virtuoso scholar monks.

Furthermore, leaving the monastery posed important economic problems. Monks lost whatever rights they might otherwise have had in their family farm when they entered the monastery. Monks who left the monastery therefore had to face the task of finding some source of income. They also reverted to their original serf status and were liable for service to their lord. In contrast, if they remained monks their basic economic needs were met without having to work hard. All these factors made it both easier and more advantageous for monks to remain in the monastery.

The special status of monks was manifested also in the monasteries being treated as semi-autonomous units within the Tibetan state, with the exclusive right to judge and discipline the monks for all crimes except murder and treason. This relative autonomy, however, did not mean that the monastic system was disinterested in the political affairs of the country. It was actually very concerned. The Gelugpa monastic leadership espoused the belief that since the Tibetan state was first and foremost the supporter and patron of religion, the needs and interests of religion should take primacy. The Dalai Lama and the rest of the government agreed with this in principle, but there was no unanimity on who was to determine what in fact was in the best interests of religion.

The monasteries held themselves to represent the essence of religion, for it was in monkhood that the highest religious values were expressed. Therefore, the monks believed that the political and economic system existed to further *their* ends and that *they,* not the government, could best judge what was in the short- and long-term interests of religion. Thus, it was their religious duty and right to intervene whenever they felt the government was acting against the interests of religion. This, of

35. While Tibetan monasteries enforced heterosexual celibacy, homosexual intercourse was generally overlooked so long as no orifice was penetrated. Thus, if a monk engaged in homosexual intercourse, it was typically done between the legs of the partner.

course, brought them into the mainstream of political affairs and into potential conflict with the ruler and the government, which also felt that they were acting in the best interests of religion.

This monastic political involvement, however, was practically restricted to Sera, Drepung, and Ganden monasteries, although a few smaller monasteries in Lhasa that belonged to incarnations who had formerly acted as regents were sometimes also involved.

The Three Major Gelugpa Monasteries

Sera, Drepung, and Ganden were collectively known by two main names. Often they were called the "three seats" (*densa sum*) of the Gelugpa sect, because they acted as the main monasteries for hundreds of smaller branch monasteries. More commonly they were known simply as *sendregasum,* an abbreviation of the first syllable of each of their names. (Hereafter, the term "Three Seats" will be used.) Sera and Drepung were both located within the Lhasa valley, Sera about three miles north of the city of Lhasa and Drepung about five and a half miles northwest of the city (see Figures 3–6 and Map 2). Ganden was located outside the valley about twenty miles east of the city.

These three monasteries were enormous, resembling bustling towns as much as sanctuaries for the pursuit of otherworldly studies. Their monks were basically divided into two groups, those who were pursuing higher studies, the "readers,"[36] and those who were not. The former became the scholars, while the latter typically could only read and chant their prayer books.[37] In the Mey college of Sera monastery, for example, only about 800 of the 2,800 monks, or 29 percent, were "readers."[38] And of these 800, many never went beyond the lower levels of learning. The nonreaders worked for the monastery (or for themselves) or simply lived off the daily distributions and teas provided by the monastery during the collective prayer sessions. However, although many of the

36. In spoken Tibetan, *pecawa.*
37. Although the past tense is used here, the Three Seats are again functioning in Tibet, albeit in an attenuated form.
38. Dunggar, interview.



3A.

Sera monastery (aerial view)

monks were engaged in nonscholarly and nonmeditative pursuits, all were celibate.

Drepung, the largest of the three monasteries, officially held 7,700 monks, but actually contained about 10,000 in 1951. Sera officially held 5,500 and Ganden 3,300, with each also actually housing more monks: Sera about 7,000, and Ganden about 5,000. By contrast, the army normally present in Lhasa numbered only 1,000 or 1,500 troops. Moreover, as many as 10 to 15 percent of the monks housed in the Three Seats were *dobdos* or "fighting monks." These monks had a distinctive appearance (style of hair, manner of tying their robes) and belonged to clubs that held regular athletic competitions. They also typically engaged in ritualized combat with weapons according to a code of chivalry, and often acted as bodyguards for the monastery.[39] The presence of 20,000 monks in and around Lhasa, thousands of whom

39. See Goldstein (1964) for a discussion of these *dobdo* monks



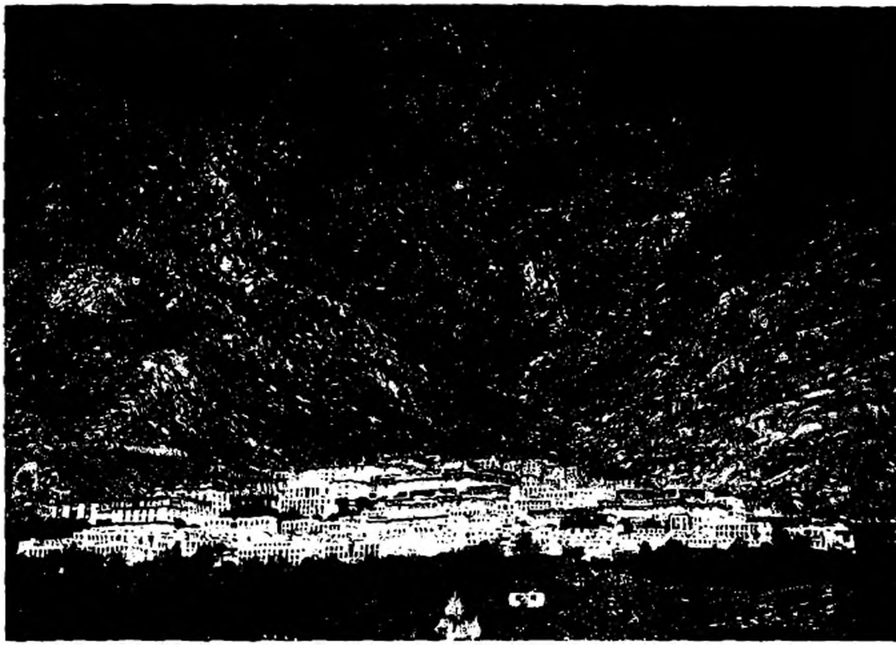
3B.

Sera monastery

re this-worldly, aggressive, fighting monks, traditionally afforded the ee monasteries tremendous coercive leverage vis-à-vis the govern-:nt, whose army in the pre-1913 period they dwarfed.

These three monasteries had extensive networks of affiliated mon-eries throughout the country, and there was a continuous flow of ›nks and monastic officials between smaller village and regional mon-eries and the parent monastery. Thus, when the Three Seats took a sition on some issue they could claim to be speaking for the over-ıelming majority of Gelugpa monks.

The Three Seats somewhat resembled the classic British universities :h as Oxford in that the overall entity, the monastery, was in reality a nbination of semi-autonomous subunits known in Tibetan as *tra-ng;* by analogy with British universities, these are commonly called leges in English. Monks belonged to a monastery only through their mbership in a college, and although there was a standing committee :t functioned with regard to monastery-wide issues, there was no



4.

Drepung monastery

abbot for the whole monastery, only for the individual colleges. Each *tratsang* or college had its own administration and resources and in turn was comprised of important residential subunits known as *khamtsen* which contained the actual apartments or cells of their monks. Like the college, they had their own administration and, to a degree, their own resources.

A potential monk could enter any of the Three Seats, but within the monastery he had to enroll in a specific khamtsen, determined by his region of origin. Membership in a khamtsen, therefore, was automatic and mutually exclusive.[40] Thus, khamtsen exhibited considerable internal linguistic and cultural homogeneity. Since different khamtsen were affiliated with different colleges, the college level also often had a regional flavor. Colleges and their khamtsen units occupied a specific spa-

40. *Khamtsen* sometimes contained dormitory subunits known as *mitsen* which were even more specific with regard to the geographic origin of the monks.



5.

Lhasa valley and city as seen from the south (1936)

(photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)



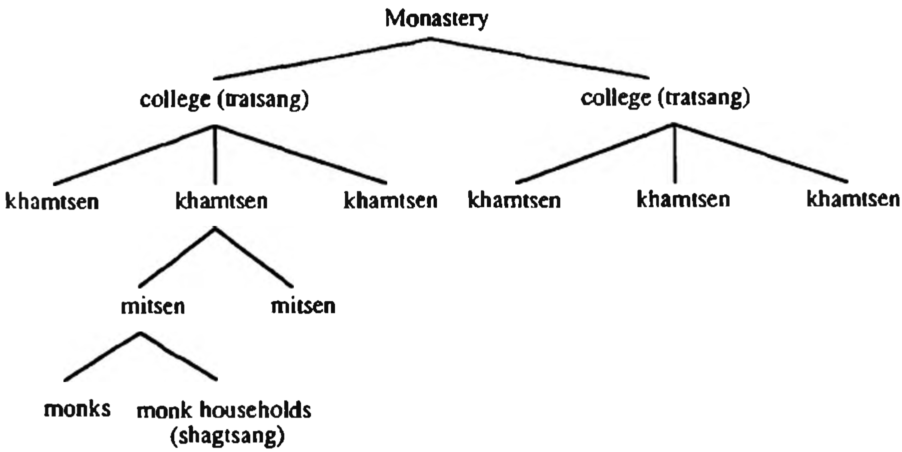
6.

Potala and Shol Town (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

tial area within the monastery and were the center of the ritual, educational, social, and political activities for their members (see Figure 7).

Each of these units—the monastery, the various colleges, and the khamtsen was a corporate entity. Each had an identity and a name that was carried across generations; each owned property and wealth in the name of the entity; and each had its own internal organization. The monks came and went, but the entity and its property endured.

It is essential to note that a monk's loyalties were primarily rooted at the khamtsen and college levels, and often little feeling of brotherhood existed between monks of different colleges within a single monastery. For example, when the Che college of Sera rebelled against the government in 1947, Sera's other large college, Mey, sided with the central government and did not assist its brother college (although its members were physically present in the monastery) (see Chapter 14). Simi-



7.

Monastic structure

larly, Drepung's Gomang college did not come to the support of Loseling college during its confrontation with the Dalai Lama in 1921 (see Chapter 3). The Three Seats, then, were really federations of semi-autonomous colleges and khamtsen which jealously guarded their own prerogatives.

Monastic Organization

Drepung, the largest monastery in Tibet, can be used to illustrate monastic organization. It was comprised of seven colleges, but by the twentieth century three no longer had monks and existed in name only. The four functioning colleges were Loseling, Gomang, Deyang, and Ngagpa. Of these, the first two were dominant in numbers, wealth, and power.[41] Loseling had twenty-three khamtsen and Gomang had sixteen. Deyang and Ngagpa had no khamtsen; all their monks instead formed a single, unnamed unit.

41. Loseling had 4,500–5,000 monks and Gomang 3,500–4,000. The three colleges without monks were Gyepa, Shagaw, and Düwa. Although these no longer had monks, the practice of appointing an abbot for them continued, so they remained politically important.

Within the khamtsen, monks either lived alone, in households with other monks, or in shagtsang, whose wealth and power gave them importance out of proportion to their numbers: they formed a kind of a monastic aristocracy and the monks themselves often called them the "monastery's aristocrats."[42] Monastic shagtsang families were structurally identical to those of the monk officials mentioned earlier. They had their own houses (*shag*), wealth, and possessions, and the larger ones usually kept numerous servant monks. They reproduced themselves by adopting relatives or, less frequently, by adopting unrelated young monks. They were extremely influential in khamtsen and college administrative affairs and held many of the important nonreligious positions, since a substantial independent income was needed to accept some of these positions. They were also a dominant force in molding the opinion of the mass of monks.

Of Loseling's twenty-three khamtsen, three held virtually all the power: Gonggo, Tsha, and Phugang. These were composed predominantly of monks from Kham (Eastern Tibet), although Gonggo khamtsen had a number of monks from Kongpo and Ü (the Lhasa area) in addition to Khambas from Shotalhosum. In general, roughly 65 to 70 percent of Loseling's monks were from Kham, with many, if not most, being from regions under Chinese control during the period this history covers.

COLLEGE AND KHAMTSEN ORGANIZATION

The highest official of the college was the abbot. He held his office for a term of six years, which could be renewed for a second term. He was appointed by the Dalai Lama or the regent from a list, submitted by the college, which normally contained about seven ranked nominees all of whom had completed the highest monastic scholarly degree, the Geshe Lharampa. Although the abbot was usually chosen from this list, the Dalai Lama could appoint someone else. Under the abbot were three officials known collectively as the "religious heads" (*uchö*). These monks, who were primarily responsible for the religious rituals, the

42. In spoken Tibetan, *gombey kudra*.

prayer sessions, and the educational activities of their college, were the prayer leader (*umdze*), the disciplinary head (*gegö*), and the monk in charge of studies (*lama shunglenba*).

Another very important group of officials known as "managers" (*chabu*) were in charge of administering the college's and khamtsen's estates, loans, and capital funds. There were eight of them in Loseling:

1. The manager of Phugang khamtsen's resources, known as the *phuja*.
2. The manager of Gonggo khamtsen's resources, known as the *gongja*.
3. The manager of Tsha khamtsen's resources, known as the *tshaja*. These three were appointed for life.
4. The manager of another set of college resources, known as the *labrang chantsö*. He was appointed by the abbot for the duration of the abbot's term.

Until the Loseling disturbance of 1921, the first three were appointed by the respective khamtsens. Afterward, the central government made the final appointments. (The reasons for this are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 in the section on the Loseling disturbance.)

5–8. Four additional appointees of the abbot, known as the *phungtsö*. These administered land acquired after the Loseling disturbance of 1921.

Each of these managers was responsible for the estates, loans, and capital funds of his khamtsen or office. Each operated independently and was responsible to his khamtsen rather than to the college. However, when economic or political pan-college issues arose, these managers played an important role both through individual discussions and via the monastic assemblies, which were convened by the abbot. These key positions tended to be monopolized by the big shagtsang households.

College assemblies could range in size from only a few of the top officials to virtually all the monks. Normally, however, the main decision-making figures included the current abbot, the ex-abbots, the *uchö*, and the various managers and special representatives sent by the khamtsen. On major issues, it was common for each khamtsen to dis-

cuss the issue before sending their delegates to the college-level assembly.[43]

Each khamtsen had its own officials, led by officials known as *chigen* and *khamtsen gegen;* they had parallel mechanisms for convening meetings of various sizes to discuss the khamtsen's position on an issue.

THE PAN-MONASTIC STRUCTURE

The monastery as a whole also owned extensive manorial estates, had officials, and sponsored religious activities. The main monastery-level disciplinary officials were the two *tshogcen shenggo.* They were selected on a rotating basis from the four colleges and served one-year terms during which their word was law. They could even criticize or fine the abbots and could not be either withdrawn or punished during their term. However, the day their term ended they were again vulnerable, and this usually restrained their behavior while they were in power.[44] They had nothing to do with economic affairs.

The main economic managers for the monastery as a whole were the two *chiso.* One of these was always appointed from Loseling college and the other from Gomang college. Each served a ten-year term and together they were in charge of the revenue and estates (with serfs).

Another powerful official in Drepung was the *photrang depa.* He functioned as the liaison with the central government and was responsible for all the government's property in the monastery. This post was held by a monk from Gomang college. (Loseling controlled an equally powerful position: the stewardship of Lhasa's famous Tsuglagang Temple, the site of Tibet's holiest statue.) The *photrang depa* was chosen from the wealthier shagtsang families and wore monk-official's dress rather than ordinary monk's robes.

The Lachi was the main assembly or parliament of the monastery. It consisted of the present abbots, the ex-abbots of all the colleges, the *photrang depa,* the two *tshogcen shenggo,* the two *chiso,* and the prayer

43. The same held true for the pan-monastery level of organization: each college would first meet to decide its own policy before going to discussion with the other colleges at monastery-level meetings.

44. Surkhang, interview.

leader (*umdze*) of the pan-monastery prayer hall (*tshogcen*). It was the main decision-making body for monastery-level policy but was not concerned with discipline and controlled no land or capital.

The Richi was another pan-monastery committee. It consisted only of the six current abbots of the colleges that taught logic (*tshenyi*), excluding the abbot of the Mantra college (Ngagpa Tratsang). It owned its own estates.

Monastic Economics

The great monasteries in Tibet depended economically on manorial estates, endowment funds, grants from the central government, and donations from the faithful. Many controlled enormous estates: for example, Drepung monastery was reputed to have held 185 estates, 20,000 serfs, 300 pastures, and 16,000 nomads.[45] The yields from these holdings were used in part to maintain the ten thousand–odd monks it housed, but the manner in which this occurred is important to understand.

In Drepung, monks not pursuing religious studies received only a very small salary in grain, and even those engaged in study received annual or monthly salaries that were insufficient to live on. Moreover, there was no monastery- or college-run communal kitchen to provide meals; monks had to prepare their own food. Monks supplemented their modest salary from the monastery in a number of indirect ways.

All monks received tea and some food when they attended the various khamtsen-, college-, and monastery-level prayer sessions, which occurred almost daily throughout the year. These were held at different times during the day in the respective prayer halls and were sponsored by individual lay persons or by the monastery, college, or khamtsen through special endowment funds or estate revenues. Responsibility for providing the food for each of these festivals was usually given to an individual monk or group of monks, who had to collect the grain and

45. Grunfeld 1975: 17. During the 5th Dalai Lama's era, Drepung had 4,200 monks, 553 serf families, and a yield from its estates of 37,922 *ke* of grain. (Dung dkar [Dunggar] 1983: 107).

money for one particular prayer event that year. For example, if the session was supported by an endowment fund, the monks responsible for the session would lend out the endowment fund's capital and use the interest from this to cover the costs. In addition to the food distribution at prayer sessions, monks received a share of all money donations (*gye*). These came from patrons who sponsored prayer ceremonies, as well as from monastery endowments. It was possible for a monk to subsist by these two mechanisms if he was willing to attend all or most of the various prayer assemblies. The nonscholarly monks also commonly worked as servants for incarnate lamas, wealthy monks, and shagtsang families and engaged in private business. The scholarly monks also sometimes received income from performing religious services for laymen.

For the Three Seats, then, the profits from estates and loans were not used as salaries for the monks. Instead, they were used to support a cycle of religious prayer ceremonies at which attending monks received food. Thus the yield from the land and serfs the monastery controlled was used for prayers for the good of all sentient beings, and, as such, was seen by the monasteries as essential for the nation.

Incarnations

Any discussion of the nature of the monastic system requires consideration of the position of the incarnate lamas—that is, lamas such as the Dalai Lama, who were believed to be continually reincarnated in human form. There were many such incarnate lamas in Tibet, and for the Gelugpa each was affiliated with the college of the Three Seats at which he had received his education. For example, the lama Reting Rimpoche was from Sera's Che college, Demo Rimpoche was from Drepung's Loseling college, and Taktra from Drepung's Gomang college.

Each incarnate lama had what in Tibetan is called a *labrang,* which in essence was the corporation of his line of incarnations. All the past property of that line of incarnations was the property of the *labrang,* and all new property and wealth acquired by the current incumbent likewise became part of this *labrang.* Like modern corporations, these

labrang retained their identity across generations, and when a lama died his *labrang* was inherited by his successor. The size and wealth of the different *labrangs* varied considerably depending on the importance of the lama and on past history; for example, incarnate lamas who had become regents of Tibet became fabulously wealthy, while other less well-known lamas might only have modest wealth. All *labrangs,* however, were structurally identical.

The most powerful of these *labrang* officials, the *chantsö* or manager, was the person in charge of the economic aspects of the *labrang.* A *labrang* manager was not only responsible for and in control of the economics of the *labrang,* but because he was generally the lama's closest and most influential advisor, he tended to be the avenue through which others contacted and influenced the lama. To understand the behavior of a lama, one usually has to look at the views of his manager. In many instances, the manager made virtually all secular and political decisions in the name of the lama. When a lama became the regent of Tibet, his manager typically played a major role in Tibetan history.

CONCLUSIONS

While the Tibetan state espoused a religious ideology, there was no clear uniformity of purpose among the key religious elements—the Dalai Lama, the Three Seats, and the monk officials. In fact, the Tibetan political process was typified by a network of crosscutting interests and alliances. For example, on the one hand, the interests of the ruler, the monk officials, and the lay officials typically were opposed to those of the Three Seats. On the other hand, the aristocracy shared dependence on the estate serf system with the monasteries, while the monk officials were totally dependent on the government. Furthermore, each aristocratic family maintained close ties with one or more khamtsen and colleges, for which it acted as patron. They also had close links with the powerful shagtsang families. The monk officials, ironically, often had poorer relationships with the Three Seats than did the lay aristocratic officials.

Moreover, competing units existed within the Three Seats. The monastic colleges were often at odds with one another, and even the

incarnate lamas were allied with specific monastic colleges and khamtsen. An essential flaw in the Tibetan politico-religious system was, therefore, that while religious priority was universally accepted, the definition of what benefited religion was often contested.

Religion, then, though a homogeneous force in Tibetan politics in one sense, was also a fragmenting and conflicting force. Competition among the various religious entities to increase their influence and prestige and the lack of consensus regarding which policies were in the interests of religion plagued twentieth-century Tibetan history. Furthermore, the mass monk ideology and the annual cycle of prayer festivals led the monasteries continually to seek more land and endowments and vigorously to oppose any attempt on the part of the government to decrease their revenues. It also made them advocates of the serf-estate economic system and, thus, extremely conservative. As Tibet attempted to adapt to the rapid changes of the twentieth century, religion and the monasteries played a major role in thwarting progress.

I

THE ERA OF THE 13TH DALAI LAMA AND RETING, 1913–1941

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE 13TH DALAI LAMA

The current view of the Dalai Lamas is that each was "the absolute ruler of unchallenged authority" whom all Tibetans devoutly obeyed.[1] While this approaches accuracy for the last two decades of the 13th Dalai Lama's life (1913–1933), it is not generally true. On the contrary, for two centuries following the death of the 5th Dalai Lama in 1682 no Dalai Lama ruled Tibet for more than a few years.[2] Moreover, those who did rule, such as the 5th Dalai Lama, put most secular affairs in the hands of their managers, who acted as prime ministers. So firmly did the new Gelugpa State come to be dominated by powerful prime ministers that in the eighteenth century, when Tibet became subordinate to China, the key Chinese administrative reform was the creation of a "collective" Council of Ministers to replace the office of prime minister (*desi*).[3]

The 13th Dalai Lama was born in Takpo in southeast Tibet in June of 1876 and was acknowledged as the 13th Dalai Lama three years

1. Michael 1982: 51.

2. The 6th Dalai Lama (1683–1706) was deposed by the Mongol Lhabsang Khan and taken to exile in Amdo, where he died at age twenty-three. The 7th (1708–1757) was sent into exile in China in 1728 by the Manchu emperor, although he was later allowed to return to Tibet. The 9th Dalai Lama (1806–1815) died at age nine, the 10th at age twenty-one (1816–1837), the 11th at age eighteen (1838–1856), and the 12th at age nineteen (1856–1875). There is ample reason to suspect that some of these Dalai Lamas were "encouraged" to leave their human form. The 8th Dalai Lama (1758–1804) survived adolescence but either allowed, or was forced to permit, a lay minister to control political affairs (Goldstein 1968: 165–66; Shakabpa 1967: 346–47).

3. Shakabpa (1967: 141–70) discusses the reforms of the Manchu.

later. He took over the reins of government in 1895 and was the dominant figure in Tibetan political history until his death in 1933. He is known as the "Great 13th" by Tibetans, because he came to exercise extraordinary power and because he led Tibet out of the sphere of Chinese influence. His reign, however, was tumultuous. During his early years he experienced both external and internal threats to his authority, and these had a lasting effect on his view of the nature of the Tibetan state.

THE DEMO AFFAIR

No sooner had the 13th Dalai Lama become ruler of Tibet than Demo Rimpoche, the regent during the 13th Dalai Lama's minority, attempted to regain power by killing him through Buddhist black magic. It appears that after Demo Rimpoche relinquished power to the 13th Dalai Lama, his enemies began to exact revenge on him by harming his supporters and friends. Helpless to protect them, the ex-regent and his brother and manager, Norbu Tsering, became increasingly frustrated and bitter.[4] Norbu Tsering enlisted the help of a lama known as Nyagtrü, from Nyarong in Eastern Tibet, who used the deity Shinje Tsheda in his black mantric rites and ultimately prepared a particularly powerful mantra which consisted of the figure of a man with outstretched arms and legs. Surrounding this figure were various written mantras, and inside its body the words *Thubten Gyatso* and *chiwa* were written: Thubten Gyatso was the personal name of the 13th Dalai Lama, and *chiwa* was his birth year. This black mantra was put inside the sole of a beautiful pair of new boots which Demo Rimpoche sent as a gift to Sogya,[5] another Khamba lama who had achieved a high level of spiritual development through the deity Shinje Tsheda and whose own spiritual development, it was believed, would synergisti-

4. Some former Tibetan officials, however, think that in addition to the brother, there was also a manager or *chantsö*. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) (1976: 76), e.g., says Norbu Tsering was Demo Rimpoche's nephew.

5. Bell (1946: 54–55) wrote that Norbu Tsering gave the boots to the Dalai Lama as a gift.

cally increase the power of the black magic and end the Dalai Lama's life.[6]

The official version of the incident reports that the state oracle, Nechung, prophesied that the Dalai Lama's life was in danger and that the boots recently given to a Sogya Lama should be investigated. Sogya was summoned and he confirmed that he had received the boots; he added that the boots were strange, for when he put them on his nose started to bleed. The boots were immediately sent for and taken apart in front of everybody, and the mantra was found in the inner sole.[7] It appears more likely, however, that Sogya Lama discovered the plot and informed the Dalai Lama or his officials, and that Nechung then opened the soles and found the black magic mantra. Sogya Lama later became a favorite of the Dalai Lama and was given a number of Demo's valuables.[8]

As a result of this, Demo Rimpoche, Norbu Tsering, Nyagtrü, and others were arrested. Demo Rimpoche died while under house arrest in Lhasa and is said to have been killed by being immersed in a huge copper water vat until he drowned. Norbu Tsering and Nyagtrü Lama were imprisoned and either died or were killed there. The government confiscated the estates of the Demo *labrang* and declared that the Demo incarnation line would not be recognized in the future.[9]

Whatever the veracity of the charges against Demo Rimpoche, the Dalai Lama himself believed that such an attempt on his life had been made.[10] Consequently, for him, not only were there historical precedents of previous Dalai Lamas not coming to power, but he himself had experienced an attack on his life. The 13th Dalai Lama also experienced external threats to his rule from both China and Britain and would never take for granted the exercise of his right to rule Tibet.

6. Gyari Nyima, interview. These are not just folktales: Tibetans to this day believe in the power of such black mantric magic rites.

7. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 75–76.

8. A pro-Tengyeling version suggests that the enemies of Demo Rimpoche trumped up the charge.

9. Several years later, however, in about 1903–1904, Demo's followers discovered the late Demo's incarnation to be a nephew of the 13th Dalai Lama, and soon after this the Dalai Lama permitted the new candidate to be acknowledged as the incarnation.

10. The Dalai Lama himself told Bell (1946: 54) that he believed the ex-regent had participated in the plot against him.

BACKGROUND OF SINO-TIBETAN RELATIONS

While the ancient relationships between Tibet and China are complex and beyond the scope of this study, there can be no question regarding the subordination of Tibet to Manchu-ruled China following the chaotic era of the 6th and 7th Dalai Lamas in the first decades of the eighteenth century.[11] However, as the Ch'ing dynasty weakened, so did its role in Tibetan affairs. By the mid-nineteenth century, if not earlier, Manchu Chinese influence was minuscule. For example, the Tibet-Dogra War of 1841, the Tibet-Nepal War of 1857, the Nyarong War of 1862–1865, and the British invasion of Tibet in 1903–1904 were fought and settled without Chinese assistance. Similarly, the overthrow in 1862 of Reting, the regent of Tibet, by Shatra and the monks of Ganden monastery brought no interference from the emperor.[12] Chinese influence in the Lhasa government via the Manchu commissioners (*ambans*) was also marginal and, for example, the selection of the 13th Dalai Lama was made without recourse to the lottery system instituted by the Manchu emperor in 1793.[13] Chinese overlordship had become more symbolic than real.

Sino-Tibetan relations are further complicated by Tibetan political theory, which conceived of the linkage with China as *chöyön,* a term that refers to the symbiotic relationship between a religious figure and a lay patron. Chöyön is an abbreviation of two words: *chöney,* "that which is worthy of being given gifts and alms" (for example, a lama or a deity), and *yöndag,* "he who gives gifts to that which is worthy" (a patron). Thus, for Tibetans, the Dalai Lama and the Manchu emperor stood respectively as spiritual teacher and lay patron rather than subject and lord.

Whatever the tenuous nature of Tibet-Chinese relations before the twentieth century, three events in the first eleven years of this century

11. Ahmad (1960), Petech (1950), Shakabpa (1967), and Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) (1976) present excellent accounts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

12. Shakabpa 1967: 172.

13. In 1793, the Manchu emperor decreed that the selection of the Dalai Lama and other high lamas such as the Panchen Lama was to be made by means of a lottery administered by the amban in Lhasa. In this lottery the names of the competing candidates were written on folded slips of paper which were placed in a golden urn. One of these was then picked blind.

dramatically altered the status quo: (1) the growth of British interest and relations with Tibet, culminating in the successful invasion of Tibet and Lhasa by the British in 1904; (2) the consequent efforts of the Chinese to reestablish control over Tibet, culminating in the military occupation of Lhasa in early 1910 by the Chinese general Chung Yin; and (3) the Chinese overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 and the mutiny of Chinese troops in Tibet.

THE 1903–1904 BRITISH INVASION OF TIBET AND THE CHINESE RESPONSE

British India's attempts to open relations with Tibet precipitated the British invasion of 1903–1904 and set in motion a host of conflicting and uncontrolled forces that have dominated Tibetan history up to the present day. By taking Tibet from the remoteness of Central Asia and thrusting it onto the center stage of Chinese, British, and Russian foreign affairs, the invasion focused a brilliant spotlight on the nature of Tibet's political status vis-à-vis China, India, and European powers such as Russia.

After the Tibetan army put up a hopelessly inadequate effort to halt the British army, the Dalai Lama, against the advice of the ambans, fled Lhasa rather than fall under British control. Traveling to distant Mongolia, where he apparently hoped to gain Russian assistance, he arrived in Urga, the capital of Outer Mongolia, in October 1904. The Chinese government responded to his flight by deposing him.

The entrance of the British army into Lhasa forced the Tibetan regent to act. Together with other monastic and government officials, he signed an agreement with Britain on 7 September 1904, under which Tibet recognized British overlordship of Sikkim and agreed to open trade relations with India. Trade marts were established in Gyantse and Gartok, and the British were permitted to station officials and troops there. Tibet also renounced all relations with foreign countries.[14]

In the aftermath of the British victory, however, the British govern-

14. Fleming (1961) and Lamb (1960, 1966) give detailed accounts of this invasion and its aftermath.

ment in London virtually repudiated the expedition and prevented the Indian government from reaping the benefits of their adventurous policy. For the next few years all attempts by Indian frontier officers to establish the British position in Tibet were thwarted by Lord Morley, the secretary of state for India in London. Even more important, the British promptly entered into negotiations with China to obtain the latter's acceptance of the Lhasa Convention. The resulting Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 reaffirmed the Chinese position in Tibet and, except for economic involvement, virtually excluded the British. Thus, although British policy during these years succeeded in opening direct relations and in establishing a British presence in Tibet, because the invasion was not followed up politically it was a Pyrrhic victory, precipitating a new activist, annexationist Chinese policy toward Tibet.

China, for the first time, now made a concerted effort to bring Tibet and the semi-autonomous Tibetan chiefdoms of Eastern Tibet (Kham) under their direct control. As they saw it, matters in Tibet had gone totally wrong. The Tibetan government, headed by the Dalai Lama, no longer obeyed the ambans or the emperor and as a result of the invasion of 1904 there seemed to be a real danger that Tibet could become a British protectorate as had Bhutan and Sikkim. In 1904–1905 the Chinese, therefore, began a program to counter this. In Batang, Kham, in 1905, they promulgated a decree that reduced the number of monks in monasteries, forbade the recruitment of monks for the next twenty years, and presented a grant of land to the French Catholic priests in Batang.[15] This caused a monk-led uprising during which the Chinese architect of this program, Feng Ch'uan, was murdered, together with his escort and two of the Catholic priests.[16]

In swift retaliation, the Szechuan provincial officials sent an army, which retook Batang and destroyed the monastery there. They also appointed Chao Erh-feng to continue the work of consolidation, and by 1908 he had pacified Kham. But this was not just a military operation. The Chinese intended to incorporate Kham under direct Chinese administration (and ultimately to do the same in Central Tibet). This fundamental shift of policy is revealed clearly in Chao's new set of regulations, which were implemented first in Batang. Four of these new rules

15. Lamb 1966: 188–89.
16. Teichman 1922: 20.

were: all inhabitants of Batang were subjects of the Chinese Emperor and subject to the jurisdiction of a Chinese magistrate; all taxes were to be paid to the Chinese; traditional taxes paid to the Tibetan chiefs and monasteries were now abolished; and all inhabitants were now subject to Chinese law.[17]

Inside Tibet proper, the ambans used the absence of the Dalai Lama and the withdrawal of the British to demonstrate to the Tibetan elite that the British were of no consequence. These Manchu commissioners boasted that it was fear of China that had led the British to withdraw their troops immediately after the Lhasa Convention was signed, and then subsequently from the Chumbi valley.[18] The ambans also set out to transform the government in Tibet and to Sinicize the elite. Plans were laid to train a large army and secularize the Tibetan government by creating lay governmental boards. Roads and telegraph lines were planned, and resource exploitation was considered; a Chinese school was opened in Lhasa in 1907, and a military college in 1908.[19]

The 13th Dalai Lama in Exile

Meanwhile, from exile in Mongolia, the 13th Dalai Lama turned to Russia. He met Pokotiloff, the new Russian minister to China, in Urga and sent Dorjieff, his Buriat Mongol monk attendant, to St. Petersburg to meet the tsar and ask "for protection from the dangers which threaten my life, if I return to Lhasa as is my intention and duty." Russia, however, had just lost the Russo-Japanese War and was experiencing political disturbances internally. The tsar, therefore, was not interested in getting entangled in the Tibetan situation and returned a polite answer, but no more.[20]

The Dalai Lama's problems were compounded when his relations with the Jetsün dampa, the leading incarnate lama of Mongolia, soured.

17. Communiqué from Goffe to the British minister in China, dated 29 December 1906, cited in Lamb 1966: 189.

18. These troops were to occupy the Chumbi valley until the Tibetans had paid Britain the indemnity established in the Lhasa Convention. When the Chinese government paid this for Tibet, the British troops left. Chumbi comprises the area around Yatung on Map 4.

19. Lamb 1966: 169–171.

20. Bell 1946: 68.

The Dalai Lama's biography explains this as follows, "Although the Jetsün dampa had great respect for the Dalai Lama, because he saw that the Mongolian people revered the Dalai Lama more than him, he gradually came to resent and dislike the Dalai Lama and wanted him to leave Mongolia."[21] Another explanation holds that the bad feelings resulted from a difference of opinion over the height of their respective thrones. The Dalai Lama wanted his throne to be higher than that of the Jetsün dampa's previous incarnation, while the current Jetsün contended that in the past the thrones of the two had been the same height. The current Jetsün dampa apparently was willing to have his throne lower than that of the 13th Dalai Lama's, but did not want his predecessor's throne to be so.[22]

Meanwhile, in Tibet, the Kashag and the Three Seats petitioned the amban in the summer of 1905 to ask the Chinese emperor to restore the Dalai Lama's titles. At the same time they sent a delegation to Mongolia requesting the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet at once. He agreed to leave Mongolia for Tibet the following April (1906).[23] However, when the Dalai Lama arrived in Amdo (Tsinghai Province) in October 1906, he was met by Chinese officials who gave him an order from the emperor instructing him to stay in Kumbum monastery in Amdo for awhile. This decision was no doubt the result of the arguments of Krang Bying-thang, the Chinese special investigatory commissioner to Tibet. Throughout 1906 he had been requesting that the emperor delay the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet to allow time for China to stabilize its position in Tibet.[24] Fearing the reception he would receive in Tibet from the ambans if he tried to defy this order, the Dalai Lama was forced to remain in Amdo for an entire year.

The Dalai Lama now changed his strategy and pursued two new courses of action. Rebuffed by the tsar and the Jetsün dampa, he sought an accommodation with the Chinese who had deposed him in 1904. At the same time, he decided it was important to improve relations with the British who controlled India.

21. Ya 1986: 552–53.
22. Trinley Dorje, interview.
23. Ya 1986: 554–55.
24. Ibid.: 556–59.

With regard to the former, he appears to have instructed his regent in Tibet to ask the amban in Lhasa to request the Manchu emperor to invite him to Peking so that he could explain the real situation in Tibet.[25] With regard to the latter, he reinstated Shatra, Sholkang, and Changkhyim, the three shapes who had been dismissed in 1903 for being pro-British, promoting each to the position of lönchen with authority above the Kashag. In 1908 he sent the British minister in China, Sir John Jordan, a verbal message that said: "The Dalai Lama now desires friendly relations with India, and thoroughly understands the position of affairs: whereas in 1903 the circumstances which led to the rupture were concealed from him by his subordinates."[26]

After spending a year in Amdo, the 13th Dalai Lama received an invitation to visit the emperor in Peking. Hoping to gain not only the emperor's agreement to his return to power in Tibet but also the right to contact the emperor without having to go through the ambans, he arrived in Peking on 28 September 1908—the first Dalai Lama since the great 5th to do so.

Although he was received with respect, his treatment fell far short of that accorded the 5th Dalai Lama, who had come as an independent ruler rather than as a deposed "subordinate." The Chinese wanted him to prostrate before the emperor but the Dalai Lama refused, and the initial meeting was postponed until he compromised, agreeing to touch his right knee to the ground before the emperor.[27] After an audience with the Dowager empress on 3 November, honors and titles were presented. The 5th Dalai Lama had received a title from the Manchu emperor when he visited Peking that translated as "Great Good, Self-Existent Buddha." The Chinese government now added a new, rather demeaning title, "Our Loyal and Submissive Vice-Regent." Teichman also reports that the Dalai Lama was given the following condescending instructions in an imperial order:

> When His Holiness has returned to Tibet, he must be careful to obey the laws of the Sovereign State China, and he must promulgate to all the goodwill of the Court of China. He must exhort the Tibetans to be obe-

25. Ibid.: 560.
26. Bell 1946: 69.
27. Ibid.: 72.

> dient and to follow the path of rectitude. He must follow the established custom of memorializing Us, through the Imperial Amban, and respectfully await Our Will.[28]

While in Peking, the Dalai Lama sent emissaries to call on the British, French, American, German, and Russian embassies, but the Chinese arranged the reciprocal meetings so as to minimize the political stature of the Dalai Lama, as this announcement indicates: "If any members of the Staffs of the Foreign Legations desire to visit the Dalai Lama, they should proceed to the Yellow Temple on any of the days of the week except Sunday between the hours of 12 and 3."[29] The Chinese also allowed only very brief meetings, which had to be held in the presence of Chinese officials.[30] The Chinese had demonstrated clearly to the 13th Dalai Lama that he was subordinate to the emperor and that his position in Tibet was dependent on their goodwill. To the extremely proud Dalai Lama this must have been a very humiliating experience.[31]

During this same period, the American minister in Peking, William W. Rockhill, wrote to the president of the United States: "The special interest to me is that I have probably been a witness to the overthrow of the temporal power of the head of the Yellow Church."[32] The Peking correspondent for the *London Times* also expressed this feeling: [The Dalai Lama's] visit has coincided with the end of his temporal power, but he has been treated with the dignity befitting his spiritual office."[33] These observers, however, counted out the Dalai Lama too early.

The Dalai Lama returned to Kumbum monastery in Amdo, and in the summer of 1909 he made his way slowly back to Lhasa, where he

28. Teichman 1922: 14–15, as cited in the Imperial Edict of 3 November 1908, translated from the Chinese *Government Gazette*.

29. Ibid.: 14.

30. Bell (1946: 74–75) reports that Sir John Jordan's interview with the Dalai Lama took only eight minutes. At this interview the Dalai Lama reiterated the sentiments of his previous message to Jordan, asking him to tell his king that "some time ago events occurred which were not of my creating; they belong to the past, and it is my sincere desire that peace and friendship should exist between the two neighbouring countries."

31. The Dalai Lama later criticized the Manchu emperor in conversations with Bell (1946: 74), expressing doubt about whether the emperor was really the incarnation of Jampeyang (Manjuśri), the Bodhiśattva of Wisdom.

32. Cited in Bell 1946: 75.

33. The Dalai Lama might well have permanently lost control of Tibet had it not been for the Chinese Revolution in 1911.

arrived on 25 December. No sooner did he arrive in Lhasa than another confrontation occurred. Despite the assurances the Dalai Lama felt he had received in Peking regarding the continuation of his rule in Tibet, as he began his journey back to Lhasa the Chinese in Szechuan and Kham decided to send a large military force to Lhasa to insure control over him. In November 1909, the British in India were surprised when the Chinese Foreign Office asked whether they could send 2,000 troops (cavalry and infantry) to Tibet via India, since this was faster than the overland route.[34] When the government of India refused, the Chinese government authorized Chao Erh-feng to send such a force to Lhasa along the overland route with all haste.[35] The advance units of this force arrived in Lhasa on 12 February 1910.

News of this military force's advance shocked the Dalai Lama and led him in December 1909, while he was still en route to Lhasa, to appeal both to the Chinese government and to Great Britain. The message to "Great Britain and all the Ministers of Europe"[36] conveys the desperation the Dalai Lama felt at having to face a Chinese army with no troops of his own. All he could do was plead for diplomatic help:

> Though the Chinese and Tibetans are of one family, yet the Chinese officer Chao and the Amban Lien are plotting together against us, and have not sent true copies of our protests to the Chinese Emperor, but have altered them to suit their own evil purposes. They are sending troops into Tibet and wish to abolish our religion. Please telegraph to the Chinese Emperor and request him to stop the troops now on their way. We are very anxious and beg the Powers to intervene and cause the withdrawal of the Chinese troops.[37]

The letter to the Chinese government, on the other hand, reflects the bitterness the Dalai Lama felt at the Chinese duplicity:

> We, the oppressed Tibetans, send you this message. Though in outward appearance all is well, yet within big worms are eating little worms. We have acted frankly, but yet they steal our hearts. Troops have been sent

34. Bell 1968: 96–97.
35. This was possible because Chao Erh-feng's troops had taken control of the major Tibetan areas of Kham such as Derge, Chamdo, Drayab, and Markham in 1908–1909, leaving the road to Lhasa wide open.
36. Bell 1946: 81.
37. Tibetan Blue Book of 1910.

> into Tibet, thus causing great alarm. We have already sent a messenger to Calcutta to telegraph everything in detail. Please recall the Chinese officer and troops who recently arrived in Kham. If you do not do so there will be trouble.[38]

Meanwhile, the Chinese amban in Lhasa convinced the Dalai Lama that his apprehensions were unfounded, that the size of this force was small, and that it was coming not to interfere with the Tibetans but solely to police the trade marts. By the time the Dalai Lama realized the truth, Chinese troops were entering Lhasa. He again decided to flee to exile, this time to India. A Chinese cavalry force of about two hundred pursued him, and his capture was prevented only by a determined rear-guard action at the Jagsam crossing organized by the Dalai Lama's twenty-two-year-old favorite, Namgang, later to become an important political figure.

On 25 February, the Chinese responded to the Dalai Lama's flight to India by again deposing him.[39] This time they deprived him not only of his temporal position but also of his status as an incarnation. The abusive and demeaning disposition order was posted publicly in Lhasa. It said in part:

> The Dalai Lama of Tibet has received abundant favours from the hands of Our Imperial predecessors. He should have devoutly cultivated the precepts of religion in accordance with established precedent in order to propagate the doctrines of the Yellow Church.
>
> But, ever since he assumed control of the administration, he has shown himself proud, extravagant, lewd, slothful, vicious and perverse without parallel, violent and disorderly, disobedient to the Imperial Commands, and oppressive towards the Tibetans.
>
> In July, 1904, he fled during the troubles and was denounced by the Imperial Amban to Us as lacking in reliability. A Decree was then issued depriving him temporarily of his Titles. He proceeded to Urga, whence he returned again to Sining. We, mindful of his distant flight, and hoping that he would repent and reform his evil ways, ordered the local officials

38. Ibid.
39. Lamb (1966, vol. 1) discusses in detail the Chinese reassertion of control in Tibet; this entire section derives primarily from his study and secondarily from those of Teichman (1922), Shakabpa (1967), and Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) (1976).

to pay him due attention. The year before last he came to Peking, was received in Audience, granted new Titles, and presented with gifts.

On his way back to Tibet he loitered and caused trouble; yet every indulgence was shown to him in order to manifest Our compassion. In Our generosity we forgave the past. Szechuan troops have now been sent into Tibet for the special purpose of preserving order and protecting the Trade Marts. There was no reason for the Tibetans to be suspicious of their intentions. But the Dalai Lama spread rumours, became rebellious, defamed the Ambans, refused supplies, and would not listen to reason.

When the Amban telegraphed that the Dalai Lama had fled during the night of February 12 on the arrival of the Szechuan troops, We commanded that steps be taken to bring him back. At present, however, his whereabouts are unknown. He has been guilty of treachery and has placed himself beyond the pale of Our Imperial favour. He is not fit to be a Reincarnation of Buddha. Let him, therefore be deprived of his titles and his position as Dalai Lama as punishment. Henceforth, no matter where he may go, no matter where he may reside, whether in Tibet or elsewhere, let him be treated as an ordinary individual. Let the Imperial Amban at once cause a search to be made for male children bearing miraculous signs and let him inscribe their names on tablets and place them in the Golden Urn, so that one may be drawn out as the true Reincarnation of previous Dalai Lamas. Let the matter be reported to Us, so that Our Imperial favour may be bestowed upon the selected child, who will thus continue the propagation of the doctrine and the glorification of the Church.

We reward Virtue that Vice may suffer. You, lamas and laymen of Tibet, are Our children. Let all obey the laws and preserve the Peace. Let none disregard Our desire to support the Yellow Church and maintain the tranquility of Our frontier territories.[40]

While the Chinese troops occupied Tibet, the Dalai Lama stayed in Darjeeling, India, and contemplated the circumstances that had allowed Tibet to be conquered twice within six years. He developed a close friendship with Sir Charles Bell, the government of India's political officer in Sikkim (see Figure 8) and learned a great deal about modern

40. Imperial decree of 25 February 1910, translated by Teichman (1922: 16–17) from the Chinese *Government Gazette*. This decree was communicated to the British in a note dated the same day.

politics.[41] He also saw firsthand how an efficient and dedicated bureaucracy and army could rule a vast country. During his three years in exile, the 13th Dalai Lama's views of the world broadened and he conceived a new vision of Tibet.

Meanwhile, the Chinese came to realize the immense difficulty they would face in trying to replace a living Dalai Lama. Thus, in September 1910, the amban offered to rescind the deposition order if the Dalai Lama would return to Tibet. The terms of the offer reflected a new Chinese policy. While the Dalai Lama would not be punished, neither would he be restored to his political position. He could live in the Potala Palace and resume his religious offices, but not his temporal ones.[42]

The Dalai Lama's response opened a new era in Tibet-Chinese relations by introducing, for the first time, what was to become basic Tibetan strategy—utilization of Britain and India as mediators or supporters vis-à-vis China:

> To Lo Ti-t'ai from the Dalai Lama: On the tenth day of the ninth month of the Iron-Dog year [1910], I received through you an urgent message from the Peking political and military departments asking me to return to Lhasa. In reply, I have the following to say: The Manchu Emperors have always shown great care for the welfare of the successive Dalai Lamas, and the Dalai Lamas have reciprocated these feelings of friendship. We have always had each other's best interests at heart. The Tibetan people have never had any evil designs on the Chinese.
>
> In the Wood-Dragon year [1904], when the British expedition arrived in Tibet, I did not consider taking any assistance except from Peking. When at Peking, I met the Emperor and his aunt, and they showed me great sympathy. The Emperor committed himself to taking care of the welfare of Tibet. On the strength of the Emperor's word, I returned to Tibet, only to find that on our eastern borders, large bodies of Chinese troops had massed and many of our subjects had been killed. Monasteries were destroyed and the people's rights suppressed. I am sure that you are fully aware of this.

41. The position of political officer in Sikkim was primarily a diplomatic post that included under its purview India's relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan.

42. Here I follow Lamb 1966, vol. 1, who utilized the records of the British and Indian governments.

Furthermore, the Amban at Lhasa, Lien-yu, had been reinforcing his troops with the object of occupying Lhasa. On several occasions, I objected to this; but he turned a deaf ear to my appeals. When the troops were on their way to Lhasa, I sent my representative, Khenchung, to meet them and explain my position; but the military officers executed Khenchung and seized all his possessions.

While on their march, Chinese troops had exploited the people and the monasteries to such an extent that my subjects and the monastery monks requested permission to retaliate. Had they done so, it would not have been impossible for us to defeat your army, owing to our knowledge of the terrain. However, a fight by my subjects against your troops might have been construed as against the Manchu Emperor. I therefore asked my ministers to negotiate with your officers and to protect your representatives in Lhasa. I also wrote to the Emperor asking him to withdraw these troops. All this is clear in the records held by both the Chinese and the Tibetans. I have several times explained this by wire to the Peking Political Department; but I have received no reply.

At Nagchuka, on my way from China to Lhasa, I wrote several notes to the Amban, informing him that China and Tibet must continue their long-standing friendship; but instead of listening to my appeal, he insisted on bringing more troops to Lhasa. The advance of the Chinese troops coincided with the Monlam festival being held at Lhasa, at which thousands of monks from different monasteries had come together. In order to avoid a clash, the Nepalese representative at Lhasa called on the Manchu Amban to prevent trouble from arising. The Amban refused to do anything about it; instead, he sent his bodyguard out to meet the advancing troops. On the way, they fired on the Lhasa police, killing some of them. They also fired on the Jokhang temple and the Potala Palace.

The Eleventh Dalai Lama's nephew, Teiji Phunkhang, and Tsedron Jamyang Gyaltsen, were Tibetan government officials assigned to administer the Monlam festival. On their way to the Jokhang temple, they were met by the troops, who fired on them. Tsedron Jamyang and Teiji Phunkhang's servant and horse were killed. Teiji Phunkhang was then beaten and taken away to the military camp. The people of Lhasa were so outraged that they wanted to take revenge; but I restrained them from doing so. I still hoped we could negotiate with China and avoid unnecessary bloodshed. Not knowing what would happen if I were captured, I appointed a representative in Lhasa to continue negotiations and I then

crossed the border of Tibet and India in order to personally conduct negotiations with China.

My ministers had appealed to me to remain in Lhasa; but had I done so a situation similar to the Muslim invasion of India might well have taken place, which resulted in many religious institutions being destroyed. As I did not want this to happen in Tibet, I came here especially to negotiate for my country, not caring what hardships I might have to endure. When I arrived at Phari, I was asked by the Chinese official of Yatung to remain at the Phari monastery and negotiate with Peking and with the Manchu Amban in Lhasa by wire. I thought this arrangement would be ideal; but when troops arrived to take me alive or dead, I had no choice but to cross the Indian border.

At Kalimpong, I came to know that the Manchu Emperor had already issued orders that I had been deposed from office. This was published in the Indian newspapers, and even in Lhasa, posters were put up announcing that I was now an ordinary person and that a new Dalai Lama would soon be chosen. Since the Emperor had done everything on the recommendation of the Manchu Amban in Lhasa, without considering the independence[43] of Tibet and the religious relationship between our two countries, I feel there is no further use in my negotiating directly with China. I have lost confidence in China and in finding any solution in consultation with the Chinese.

I have contacted the British because the 1904 Convention permits us to deal directly with them. The Chinese are responsible for this action of mine.

During my stay in India, Amban Lien-yu has moved Chinese troops all over Tibet and has exploited Tibetan subjects to extremes. They have stopped my supplies and censored my letters from Tibet. They have seized the treasury in Lhasa, emptied our armory, and seized our mint factories. Khenche Khenrab Phuntsok, assistant to my representative in Lhasa, aged seventy years, who was completely innocent, was imprisoned without cause and sent to Tachienlu. Judicial cases that have already been settled were reopened. Tibetan Government property and the property of Tibetan officials and monasteries have been illegally seized.

You are fully aware of this inexcusable illegal action taken by your troops; yet you inform me and my ministers that the situation in Tibet is

43. The Tibetan for this is *rgyal khab rang dbang can* (Zhwa sgab pa [Shakabpa] 1976: 189). This literally means "having self-power over the nation."

peaceful and that the status quo is being maintained. I know that this has been said to persuade me to return and also I know that it is false.

Because of the above, it is not possible for China and Tibet to have the same relationship as before. In order for us to negotiate, a third party is necessary; therefore we should both request the British government to act as an intermediary. Our future policy will be based on the outcome of discussions between ourselves, the Chinese and the British. Are you able to agree to the participation of the British in these discussions? If so, please let me know.

In case you are not agreeable to this, I am handing you a letter containing the above facts, written in both the Manchu and Tibetan languages, which I would like you to forward to the Emperor. Please explain carefully to the Emperor the contents of my letter. [Dated] Thirteenth day of the ninth month of the Iron-Dog year [1910].

(Seal of the Dalai Lama)[44]

This letter reveals that the Dalai Lama wished to return to a Tibet he could control. He would still accept a loose form of subordination to the Manchu emperor, but now only with the British acting as a guarantor against Chinese perfidy.

THE CHINESE REBELLION

Soon after this letter was sent, events in China altered the situation, fortuitously for the Dalai Lama. In early October 1911, the Chinese rose up in a nationalistic rebellion against their non-Chinese rulers, the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty. After an attempt to quell the rebellion failed, on 20 December it was agreed to create a republican form of government, and on 12 February 1912, the child emperor abdicated. On 15 February, Yuan Shih-k'ai was elected provisional president of China. In the meantime, however, troops throughout much of the empire had rebelled: "In south and west China, province after province declared its independence of Manchu rule, and the Manchu garrisons were slaughtered. Szechuan was among the revolting provinces. Tuan Fang was

44. Shakabpa 1967: 234–37.

murdered by his own men while still en route to Chengtu, and not long afterwards Chao Erh-feng was also killed."[45]

When news of the revolution reached Lhasa, soldiers of the garrison attacked and looted the amban's residence, capturing him. They then issued orders calling for their fellow troops in other parts of Tibet to return to Lhasa. In India, the Dalai Lama created a secret War Department and began an armed rebellion against the Chinese. By April 1912, the Tibetans had prevailed: about three thousand Chinese troops and officers surrendered and were permitted to leave Tibet via India. In the fifth Tibetan month of the Water-Mouse year (1912), the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet, staying first in Chumbi and then, in January 1913, finally entering a Lhasa free of Chinese troops and officials for the first time since the eighteenth century.

While the Dalai Lama was waiting for the last of the Chinese troops to leave Tibet, Yuan Shih-k'ai sent him a dissembling telegraph apologizing for the excesses of the Chinese troops and "restoring" his former rank.

> The Dalai Lama has addressed a communication to the Head of the Department of Mongolian and Tibetan affairs in which he states that after his return from Peking to Tibet he did his utmost to arrange the affairs of the country satisfactorily. Later on, having been deprived of his rank, he resided for a time at Darjeeling. But, Tibet having remained in a state of unrest ever since the disturbances in Szechuan last winter, he now desires to protect the Buddhist Church and prays that the President of the Republic may take measures to this end.
>
> Now that the Republic has been firmly established and the Five Races deeply united into one family, the Dalai Lama is naturally moved with a feeling of deep attachment to the mother country. Under the circumstances, his former errors should be overlooked, and his Title of *Loyal and Submissive Vice-Regent, Great, Good, and Self-Existent Buddha* is hereby restored to him, in the hope that he may prove a support to the Yellow Church and a help to the Republic.[46]

The Dalai Lama replied that he had not asked for his former rank from the Chinese government and that he "intended to exercise both tem-

45. Clubb 1964: 41.
46. Teichman's (1922: 17–18) translation of the "Presidential Mandate of October 28, 1912," as published in the Chinese *Government Gazette* (emphasis added).

poral and ecclesiastic rule in Tibet."[47] In other words, he cut even the symbolic tie with China.

Twenty-two days after his return to Lhasa, the Dalai Lama issued a proclamation to all his officials and subjects that unilaterally reaffirmed his total rule in Tibet:

> I, the Dalai Lama, most omniscient possessor of the Buddhist faith, whose title was conferred by the Lord Buddha's command from the glorious land of India, speak to you as follows:
>
> I am speaking to all classes of Tibetan people. Lord Buddha, from the glorious country of India, prophesied that the reincarnations of Avalokiteśvara, through successive rulers from the early religious kings to the present day, would look after the welfare of Tibet.
>
> During the time of Genghis Khan and Altan Khan of the Mongols, the Ming dynasty of the Chinese, and the Ch'ing dynasty of the Manchus, Tibet and China co-operated on the basis of [a] benefactor and priest relationship. A few years ago, the Chinese authorities in Szechuan and Yunnan endeavored to colonize our territory. They brought large numbers of troops into central Tibet on the pretext of policing the trade marts. I, therefore, left Lhasa with my ministers for the Indo-Tibetan border, hoping to clarify to the Manchu Emperor by wire that the existing relationship between Tibet and China had been that of patron and priest and had not been based on the subordination of one to the other. There was no other choice for me but to cross the border, because Chinese troops were following with the intention of taking me alive or dead.
>
> On my arrival in India I dispatched several telegrams to the Emperor; but his reply to my demands was delayed by corrupt officials at Peking. Meanwhile the Manchu Empire collapsed. The Tibetans were encouraged to expel the Chinese from central Tibet. I, too, returned safely to my rightful and sacred country, and I am now in the course of driving out the remnants of Chinese troops from Do Kham in eastern Tibet. Now, the Chinese intention of colonizing Tibet under the patron-priest relationship has faded like a rainbow in the sky. Having once again achieved for ourselves a period of happiness and peace, I have now allotted the following duties to be carried out without negligence:
>
> (1) Peace and happiness in this world can only be maintained by preserving the faith of Buddhism. It is, therefore, essential to preserve all Buddhist institutions in Tibet.
>
> (2) The various Buddhist sects in Tibet should be kept in a distinct

47. Bell 1946: 135.

and pure form. Buddhism should be taught, learned and meditated upon properly. Except for special persons, the administrators of monasteries are forbidden to trade, loan money, deal in any kind of livestock, and/or subjugate another's subjects.

(3) The Tibetan government's civil and military officials, when collecting taxes or dealing with their subject citizens, should carry out their duties with fair and honest judgment so as to benefit the government without hurting the interests of the subject citizens. Some of the central government officials posted at Ngari Korsum in western Tibet, and Do Kham in eastern Tibet, are coercing their subject citizens to purchase commercial goods at high prices and have imposed transportation rights exceeding the limit permitted by the government. Houses, properties, and lands belonging to subject citizens have been confiscated on the pretext of minor breaches of the law. Furthermore, the amputation of citizens' limbs has been carried out as a form of punishment. Henceforth such severe punishments are forbidden.

(4) Tibet is a country with rich natural resources; but it is not scientifically advanced like other lands. We are a small, religious and independent nation. To keep up with the rest of the world, we must defend our country. In view of past invasions by foreigners, our people may have to face certain difficulties, which they must disregard. To safeguard and maintain the independence of our country, one and all should voluntarily work hard.

(5) Tibet, although thinly populated, is an extensive country. Some local officials and landholders are jealously obstructing other people from developing vacant lands, even though they are not doing so themselves. People with such intention are enemies of the State and our progress. From now on, no one is allowed to obstruct anyone else from cultivating whatever vacant lands are available. Land taxes will not be collected until three years have passed; after that the land cultivator will have to pay taxes to the government and to the landlord every year, proportionate to the rent. The land will belong to the cultivator. Your duties to the government and to the people will have been achieved when you have executed all that I have said here. This letter must be posted and proclaimed in every district of Tibet, and a copy kept in the records and offices in every district.

From the Potala Palace.

(Seal of the Dalai Lama)[48]

48. Shakabpa 1967: 246–47.

Tibetans consider this proclamation and the response to Yuan Shih-k'ai to be declarations of independence.[49] Although these are not precisely a declaration of independence in contemporary Western terms, considering the political ideology extant in Tibet at that time they clearly indicate the Dalai Lama's desire for freedom, as well as his intention of ruling Tibet without Chinese titles and devoid of Chinese internal interference.

The Chinese were not, however, the only threat the 13th Dalai Lama perceived during 1904–1913. Internal concerns also weighed heavily on his mind. During his exile in Mongolia, China, and India, important officials and elements of the Gelugpa monastic segment sided with the Chinese or the British and thus appeared to undermine his authority, if not actually to encourage his deposition. One such set of incidents involved the second greatest Gelugpa incarnation, the Panchen Lama.

In 1904–1906, while the 13th Dalai Lama was in exile in Mongolia, the Panchen Lama visited India at the invitation of the British government there. The Chinese press saw this as a ploy of the British to substitute the Panchen Lama for the Dalai Lama; and W. O'Connor, the first British trade agent in Gyantse, had in fact visited the Panchen Lama in 1905 and concluded that the Lama was not averse to establishing his political independence from Lhasa by means of British support.[50]

In 1909, when the Dalai Lama fled to India, the Panchen Lama refused a written request from the Dalai Lama to join him.[51] This refusal angered the Dalai Lama, who felt that the Panchen's presence would show solidarity and enhance his efforts both to publicize Chinese brutality abroad and to protest to the Imperial Court. Moreover, the Panchen Lama then accepted an invitation from the amban to come

49. Ibid.

50. Lamb 1966, vol. 1: 16–31. The O'Connor comment derives from F017/1753, India Office to Foreign Office, dated 26 October and 19 November 1904; F017/1754, India Office to Foreign Office, dated 7 March 1905; and O'Connor 1940: 85. (These are cited in Lamb 1966.) Mehra (1976: 33) cites a note from Bell saying that the Panchen Lama told a Tibetan government official that O'Connor had threatened him that "ill-will will befall [him] if he [Panchen Lama] did not go [to India]." This, however, is unlikely to have been an important factor underlying his visit to India and appears to have been simply a post hoc rationalization.

51. Phun rab 1984: 125–27.

to Lhasa. Staying in the Dalai Lama's quarters, he frequently participated in ceremonies and parties with the amban and the Chinese military commander. For example, during the Butter-Sculpture Festival he was taken with the amban in procession around Lhasa in a palanquin in the way the Dalai Lama normally was.[52]

Tibetans have a custom of composing satirical political lyrics to traditional tunes and singing these on the streets of Lhasa.[53] These songs poke fun at the mighty and are a kind of verbal political cartoon. A street song sung at this time criticized the Panchen Lama's duplicitous behavior:

> The bird known as magpie
> has a body that is half black and half white.
> After the great cuckoo bird arrives,
> we will slowly be able to have discussions.[54]

(The magpie here stands for the Panchen Lama, its black-and-white body symbolizing the two-faced role the Panchen was playing. The cuckoo, the king of the bird world, stands for the Dalai Lama.)

In 1911–1913, the Dalai Lama was further angered when the Panchen's followers did not assist the Dalai Lama's forces in expelling the Chinese from Shigatse, the Panchen Lama's home area.[55] Similarly, in 1912–1913, when the 13th Dalai Lama and his volunteer forces were engaged in battle with the Chinese in Lhasa, many of the monks of Drepung, particularly those of Loseling, refused to fight against the Chinese. Moreover, the Tengyeling monks permitted a large group of

52. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 191–92; Phun rab 1984: 125–27.

53. See Goldstein 1982 for a discussion of these Lhasa street songs.

54. In Tibetan, *bya de skra ka zer ba'i / lus de phyed dkar phyed nag / bya chen khu yug phebs nas / bka' mol ga ler zhus chog.*

55. Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms.: 103–4. The 13th Dalai Lama's feelings are expressed clearly in a response he wrote to Chiang Kai-shek in 1929: "Among the Panch'en's retinue, many employed the terms 'Anterior' and 'Ulterior' Tibet with intent to sow discord. They disobeyed orders of the Tibetan Government and acted frequently against their superiors. Both their thought and conduct are corrupt. In the year Chia Ch'en (1904), the Panch'en went on to India and conspired with the British, but all his efforts were of no avail. In the year Hsin Hai (1911), he intrigued with the Resident Lien-yu and made an attempt to seize the reins of government and control of the church during the absence of the Dalai Lama. But his efforts were thwarted by the opposition of the people and especially of the clergymen of the three leading monasteries." (Translated by Li [1956: 154] from a manuscript by Shih Ching-yanga, the chairman of the Chinese Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission.)

Chinese troops to enter their monastery in Lhasa, forcing the Tibetan volunteers with whom they were fighting to lay a lengthy siege. In addition, it also appeared that a number of high aristocratic officials had been collaborating with the Chinese; one of these, Tsarong Shape, was murdered in Lhasa, together with his son, by pro–Dalai Lama forces in 1912. Clearly, unswerving devotion to the Dalai Lama was not automatic.

TIBET AND THE NEW REPUBLIC IN CHINA

The Dalai Lama's triumphant return to Tibet in 1912–1913 did not end his problems. All Chinese officials and troops had been expelled from Lhasa and Tibet, but the fall of the Ch'ing Dynasty produced no change in Chinese attitudes toward Tibet. In fact, on the day of his abdication in February 1912, the child emperor charged:

> Let Yuan-Shih-k'ai organize with full powers a provisional republican government, and confer with the Republican army as to methods of union, thus assuring peace to the people and tranquility to the Empire, and forming one Great Republic of China *by the union as heretofore of the five peoples, namely, Manchus, Chinese, Mongols, Mohammedans, and Tibetans, together with their territory in its integrity.*[1]

The new Chinese government of Yuan Shih-k'ai took this charge seriously, despite the earlier recommendation of China's great revolutionary, Sun Yat-sen, that non-Chinese (i.e., non-Han) should themselves decide whether they wanted to be united with China. Yuan Shih-k'ai's government not only proclaimed Tibet to be a part of China but began to take steps to implement their views. In the summer of 1912, the Chinese forces in Eastern Tibet regrouped under General Yin Ch'ang-heng and soon after retook Batang, Chamdo, Drayab, Markham, and other areas. In 1913, Chatreng was subdued and Chinese

1. Clubb 1964: 43 (emphasis added).

control pushed westward. The Tibetan government distrusted this new Szechuan army, considering it likely that Yin, like Chao Erh-feng in 1909–1910, would soon advance on Central Tibet and Lhasa.

Consequently, when the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in 1913 to begin his second reign, he attempted to control both external and internal threats by improving his government's effectiveness and modernizing his army and also by trying to reach a political agreement with the Chinese.

Before 1913, all of Tibet had only about 3,000 regular troops. These were a sorry lot, untrained in modern techniques, with out-of-date arms; moreover, many of the soldiers were old and infirm.[2] They had been recruited as a corvée labor tax from landholders who had in the past been granted arable land with the obligation that they provide and support a soldier.[3] More often than not, however, these "taxpayer" serfs hired substitutes to serve their obligations.

In 1913–1914, the Dalai Lama, with close advisors such as Chamba Tendar and the Dalai Lama's young favorite, Tsarong,[4] reorganized this system and raised an additional 1,000 troops by requiring that every

2. These troops, known as *gyajong* or "Chinese trained," appear to have been created after the Nepal-Tibet war, in 1792, by the Chien Lung Emperor as part of a new military force in Tibet consisting of about 3,300 Tibetan and 1,450 Chinese troops. In 1846, the Tibetan troops were separated from the Chinese troops. The Tibetan force contained roughly 1,800 troops from the province of Ü and 1,200 troops from the province of Tsang. (Kreng 1984: 182–83.)

3. These were called *makang* or "military" *kang*, a *kang* being the standard Tibetan unit of land measurement. It equals the amount of land on which a set volume of seed can be sown (ibid.: 194). Today in Tibet roughly one-half *kang* (nine *ke*) is considered equal to one acre.

4. This young favorite was earlier known as Jensey ("Favorite") Namgang. He was born in 1885 into a peasant family in Phembo who were serfs of Phurbucho Labrang (Taring 1970: 18–19; Skal ldan 1985; 252–53). Namgang's father farmed and made arrows on the side, but had many taxes and debts and was very poor. Namgang and his brother, consequently, ran away from home. After many adventures, Namgang was taken on as a servant of a monk official from Namkye Tratsang who accompanied the Dalai Lama to Mongolia. Namgang gradually became a favorite of the Dalai Lama's (Skal ldan 1985: 253–55). He organized the critical rearguard action in 1910 at Jagsam, when the 13th Dalai Lama was fleeing to India. Favorites such as Namgang were a particular feature of the 13th Dalai Lama's style of rule, and as we shall see, often exerted enormous power (Bell 1946: 140–41). Jensey Namgang was ennobled after the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet in 1913 and was given the title of *dzasa*. He married into the aristocratic Tsarong family and took their name.

two military fields in Ü, and every four in Tsang Province, provide one soldier.[5] These 4,000 troops were placed under the command of a Commander-in-Chief's Office headed by Tsarong and were formed into five regiments, numbered alphabetically (i.e., ka, kha, ga, nga, ja):

1. Kadang (Bodyguard) Regiment: half came from Ü and half from Tsang. This new regiment, permanently quartered in Norbulinga in Lhasa, guarded the Dalai Lama.
2. Khadang (Trapchi) Regiment: from Ü and Lhoka.
3. Gadang (Shigatse) Regiment: from Shigatse in Tsang.
4. Ngadang (Gyantse) Regiment: from Gyantse and nearby districts in Tsang.
5. Jadang (Dingri) Regiment: From Dingri, near the Nepalese border.[6]

The Dalai Lama then promoted Chamba Tendar to the rank of shape and sent him to Kham as governor-general at the head of the four non-Lhasa-based regiments, with instructions to raise Khamba local militia. Chamba's Tibetan forces attacked and drove the Chinese from Shopando, Lho Dzong, and Khyungpo (see Map 5) and then established defensive positions centered at Shopando. A de facto frontier line came to be established between the Chinese (in Chamdo and Batang) and the Tibetan forces roughly along the line of the divide of the Salween and Mekong rivers.[7]

The volatile frontier in Kham persuaded the Dalai Lama to seek a negotiated settlement with China, for without this, Tibet would have to maintain costly defenses against an invasion such as occurred in 1910. However, the Dalai Lama's negative experiences in China had convinced him that Tibet could have no real security unless an outside power guaranteed the terms of any such Sino-Tibetan agreement. Britain seemed the obvious choice for a guarantor.

5. Rnam rgyal dbang 'dus 1976: 17–18; Kreng 1984: 194. The discrepancy between the Ü and Tsang levies was due to the poorer yields in Tsang and its greater distance from Lhasa.

6. Kreng (1984: 183) incorrectly stated that the army was initially increased to 6,500 troops in 1912–1913.

7. Anon. 1940: 7–11.

The British government of India was also eager to see the Sino-Tibetan dispute settled. Its paramount aim was the creation of a political vacuum along India's northern flank. The Chinese incursions into Po and the Assam borderlands in 1910–1912 and their harassment of the British trade agents in Tibet had shown India all too clearly the dangers of direct Chinese control of Tibet.

In late 1913, under considerable British pressure, China agreed to join Britain and Tibet in tripartite talks in India to settle the question of the Sino-Tibetan frontier and to agree upon Tibet's political status. These Simla Talks were to set the tone for Tibetan and British foreign policy for the next three and a half decades.

Heading the Tibetan negotiating team was the Lönchen Shatra, a senior aristocratic officer of the highest rank who had been with the Dalai Lama in India. He was given plenipotentiary powers for these negotiations. The Tibetan government sent a mass of documents and records to Simla in support of its territorial and political claims. Tibet's initial written statement took a very hard line on both the political and the territorial issue, demanding the reunification of all Tibetan-speaking peoples under the administration of the Dalai Lama (including all of Amdo and Kham as far as Tachienlu; see Map 5) and claiming independent political status, with Chinese officials to be forbidden to enter Tibet. This Tibetan position paper, signed by the Lönchen Shatra, represents an important formal statement of the views of the "new" government in Lhasa:

> Firstly, the relations between the Manchu Emperor and the Protector, Dalai Lama the fifth, became like that of the disciple towards the teacher. The sole aim of the then Government of China being to earn merit for this and for the next life, they helped and honoured the successive Dalai Lamas and treated the monks of all the monasteries with respect. Thus friendship united the two countries like the members of the same family. The Tibetans took no notice of their boundary with China for they thought that the actions were all meant for the good of Tibet. Gradually the Chinese Emperor lost faith in the Buddhist religion, and he treated the precious Protector, the Dalai Lama, with less respect. The Chinese Amban in Tibet and his subordinate officials and troops entertained very little respect, later on, for the precious Protector, the Dalai Lama, although they knew him to be the owner and Ruler of Tibet both in reli-

gious and secular affairs, while they treated the people of Tibet, both laymen and monks, most disrespectfully and meanly as if they were pigs, asses and cattle. They oppressed the Tibetans and treated them with partiality, thus driving them to grief and desperation. After the trouble between the British and the Tibetans in the Wood Dragon year (1903–1904) the Chinese brought soldiers to Tibet on the plea of guarding the country. Commencing from Dar-tse-do [Tachienlu] they picked unnecessary quarrels with the people on the road, and robbed and destroyed villages and monasteries without any provocation. Immediately on their arrival at Lhasa, without any consideration for any agreements either verbal or in writing, they killed and wounded Tibetan officials. They fired at the Potala, the residence of the Dalai Lama, who was then staying in the Palace. They created such a disturbance that the Dalai Lama and the principal officers of Tibet, feeling themselves unsafe, had to leave the city. Len Amban, with the intention of killing and wounding as many of them as possible, sent many soldiers after them. All these circumstances were repeatedly explained to the authorities at Pekin, but they paid no heed. After this, the Chinese proclaimed that the precious Protector Dalai Lama was degraded and should be treated as one of the common people, in order thereby to usurp the Government and the revenue of Tibet for themselves. They violated the treaties and forcibly took possession of all powers from the Tibetans. Wholly ignoring the holy tie of the disciple and the teacher, the [*sic*] committed unlimited injury both to the Government and the people of Tibet. During the revolution in China, the Chinese officials and troops in Tibet on the plea of civil strife among themselves, killed and robbed the people in U and Tsang and destroyed their houses and property. The country might be described as full of robbers and thieves. They attacked the monastery of Sera without any provocation, set fire to the city of Lhasa and created disturbance everywhere. They tried their best to destroy the upper and lower Palaces (the Potala and Norbulinga), the Cathedral [Jokang] and other places held sacred by the Tibetans. All their evil deeds and intentions cannot be recounted in years and months to come. At last the Tibetans, driven by sheer desperation, had to fight, which ended in the defeat of the Chinese. A treaty was accordingly concluded, keeping the Gurkha as an intermediary. The Chinese officers and troops volunteered to withdraw from Tibet, and they returned to China by sea. Even after this, the Chinese officials and troops, devoid of shame as a nation, disregarded the treaties, and came to Kham where they set fire to many monasteries and many thousands of houses of our subjects, killed the people and robbed them

of their property, although the Tibetans were staying in their own country. These people (the Chinese officials and troops) should be punished to the satisfaction of everybody. *Tibet and China have never been under each other and will never associate with each other in future. It is decided that Tibet is an independent State and that the precious Protector, the Dalai Lama, is the Ruler of Tibet, in all temporal as well as in spiritual affairs. Tibet repudiates the Anglo-Chinese Convention concluded at Pekin on the 27th April 1906, as she did not send a representative for this Convention nor did she affix her seal on it. It is therefore decided it is not binding on the three Governments.*

Secondly, as regards the boundary between China and Tibet it is decided to be as follows: On the North-east by the stone pillar at Mirugang in Zilling, thence to the East along the course of the river coming from Mar-chen Pomra mountain until it comes to its first big bend and thence to the South-east at a place called Chorten Karpo in Jintang. This is well-known to everybody. According to the new maps of the British Government, the boundary of Tibet is as follows: on the North the Kuen Lun Range, the Altyn Tagh, the Tse-dam Range connecting the Altyn Tagh with the Ho Shili Range, the Ba-Kang Po-to Range, thence to the North of Tso Gnon-Po, including the Ba-nak Kha-sum country to the border of Khan-su province of China, thence in a southerly and South-easterly direction, including the country of Go-lok, Hor-kog, Nya-rong, Gya-rong—Gya-kag—Cho-gyet, Chak-la, and Dar-tse-do [Tachienlu], thence in a Southerly direction to the junction of the boundaries of Sze-chuan and Yunnan and thence West along the boundary of Tibet to Rima. This part of the country has recently been named by the Chinese as Hsi-kang [Sikang]. The above countries all form part of Tibet, being inhabited by the Tibetans and included in Tibet. It is decided that the revenue of these countries of the past years shall be returned to the Tibetans.

Thirdly, the Tibetan Trade Regulations of the 5th December 1893 and those of the 27th April 1908 will be revised by the Governments of Great Britain and Tibet in mutual consultation and agreement, *China having no longer any concern with the aforesaid Trade Regulations.*

Fourthly, after all this trouble, great enmity has been generated between the Chinese and the Tibetans. It will therefore be only a source of constant friction if they were to live together in one country in future. It has already caused great trouble to the people of Tibet owing to the oppressive ways of the Chinese officials and troops. *In future no Chinese*

officials and troops will be allowed to stay in Tibet. Their staying there is only an expense to the Chinese, who obtain no revenue from Tibet. In order therefore to ensure peace between the two countries in future no Chinese Amban or other officials and no Chinese soldiers or colonists will be permitted to enter or reside in Tibet. Chinese traders shall be admitted to Tibet when so authorised by permits issued by or under the authority of the Tibetan Government.

... Sixthly, the Chinese Government will compensate the Tibet Government soon in money for all the forcible exactions of money or other property taken from the Tibet Government, for the revenue of Nya-rong and other districts, which they kept in their possession by force, for destroying houses and property of monasteries, officials and subjects of Tibet and for the damage done to the persons or property of Nepalese and Ladakhis. A list [of] the damage done can be produced but more such lists are coming from Kham. The Tibetan Government is unable to bear this loss.

The above are our claims.

Dated the 11th day of the 8th month of the Water-bull year
[10th October 1913].[8]

The territories claimed by the Tibetans are those east of the 1914 boundary claim line on Map 6. They included large areas of rich agricultural lands that were then held by the Chinese. Some, such as Amdo, had been directly controlled by China since the eighteenth century, while others, such as Nyarong and Derge, had been lost to China only a few years earlier during the time of Chao Erh-feng.

The Chinese, in their initial Simla statement, took an equally hard line:

Since the commencement of intercourse between China and Tibet there have been many occasions on which the latter has received much needed assistance and protection from the former. A Chinese expedition first entered Lhasa in the seventh century, and in 1206 Tibet was again subdued by Genghis Khan, who incorporated it into his wide-spread Empire. Tibet remained in this relation to China during the time of the Ming Dynasty. In 1650, the fifth Dalai Lama came to China to pay re-

8. Emphasis added. For the full text, see ibid.: 1–6.

spects to the emperor Shen Chih, who confirmed him in that title by issuing to him a warrant and a seal. In 1717 the Zungarians invaded Tibet and overran the whole country, and with the assistance of the Chinese the Tibetans afterwards succeeded in driving out their enemies. In response to a request proferred by the Tibetans, who were grateful to the Chinese, the Emperor Kang Hsi appointed an Amban to reside in order that the Tibetans could be better looked after. In the reign of Yung Cheng, two Ambans were appointed instead of one.

From thenceforward Tibet was twice invaded by the Gurkhas. At one time the number of Gurkhas occupying Lhasa was 18,000 in all, and these invaders destroyed the monastery of Tashilhunpo and there ransacked everything on which they could lay their hands. So powerless and helpless were the Tibetans that they again went to China for assistance. To their supplication China responded at once by sending over 50,000 soldiers to Tibet; and accordingly the Gurkhas were driven out of the country. Tibet was then definitely placed under the sovereignty of China.

What sacrifices China has made in money and lives for the sake of protecting the Tibetans and their territory! Not only are these events recorded in Chinese history, but they are also referred to in English records and books, both official and private.

As regards the recent relations between China and Tibet which have resulted in such a misunderstanding as now exists between the two peoples, it is not China that can be blamed, but it is entirely due to the conduct of His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself. His Holiness once had an official named Dorjieff in his confidence, and on many occasions this official by means of dangerous intrigues tried to stir up international questions between China and her near neighbours. This ultimately led to the British expedition to Lhasa in 1904 which nearly jeopardized the friendly relations between China and Great Britain.

Had His Holiness the Dalai Lama then taken the advice of the Chinese Amban Yu-Kang by dispatching a high official to meet Colonel Younghusband, His Britannic Majesty's Commissioner, on the Tibetan frontier, and conduct negotiations, the British Expedition to Lhasa would have been avoided and the payment of an indemnity of Rs. 25,000,000 by China on behalf of Tibet would have been saved. It is, therefore, maintained here that what has happened is all through the intractability of His Holiness to the good advices [*sic*] given to him by China from time to time, and his ignorance of the international situation.

With regard to the action which China has taken within recent

years on her frontier, it is because the Chinese and local inhabitants in that quarter have been frequently treated with injustice by the Lama authorities and they have appealed to the Chinese authorities for protection. Their appeal was immediately responded to, but the Tibetans aggravated the situation by their brutal murder of Amban Fung and many Chinese officials, who were skinned to death. From what has been related it is evident that the claims presented in the Tibetan statement are inadmissible, and in an answer to them the following demands are made as the only basis for the negotiation of the Tibetan question:

(i) It is hereby agreed by the undersigned that Tibet *forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of China*, that no attempts shall be made by Tibet or by Great Britain to interrupt the continuity of this territorial integrity, and that *China's rights of every description which have existed in consequence of this territorial integrity shall be respected by Tibet and recognized by Great Britain*. The Republic of China engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province, and Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it.

(ii) The Republic of China has the right of appointing a Resident to reside at Lhasa, who is entitled to all such privileges and rights as he hitherto enjoyed. He is also entitled to have an escort of 2,600 Chinese soldiers, one thousand of whom shall be stationed in Lhasa, while the remaining 1,600 shall be stationed at such place as the Resident thinks fit.

(iii) Tibet undertakes to be guided by China in her foreign and military affairs and not to enter into negotiation with any foreign Powers except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government. . .

(iv) Tibet agrees to grant an amnesty to all those Tibetan officials and people who have been imprisoned by the Tibetan authorities merely on account of their well known sympathy for the Chinese and also to restore to them all the property which has been confiscated by the said authorities for the same reason.

(vii) The frontier boundary between China Proper and Tibet is now roughly indicated in the accompany[ing] map.[9]

This map placed the boundary in the general area of Giamda, a point a mere hundred miles from Lhasa (see Map 6).

9. Ibid.: 7–11 (emphasis added).

With two such diametrically opposed views, a compromise agreement of some sort was unlikely.

Although British interests and those of the Dalai Lama overlapped, they were far from identical. His Majesty's Government had little interest in an "independent" Tibet. Not only would its creation cause considerable international discord and obstruct Britain's dealings with China and Russia, but Tibet could then develop unilateral alliances with countries such as Russia. British interests were best served by treating Tibet as a self-governing dominion nominally under China but with the Chinese influence limited and with relations with other European countries virtually nonexistent. This came to be known as the Simla Position: symbolic subordination to China, with extensive autonomy, under the watchful eye of Great Britain.

Since Britain was unwilling to support Tibetan independence, the Tibetans compromised on the political issue in order to obtain a guarantee that the Chinese government would not interfere with Tibet's traditional government or social system. The Tibetans also agreed to territorial compromises, accepting a final Sino-Tibetan boundary line that fell between the Yangtse and Mekong rivers rather than far to the east as originally demanded.

The talks culminated in the Simla Convention of 1914, given in its entirety in Appendix C. It covered four main points. First, the Tibetan populations were to be divided between Outer and Inner Tibet. Outer Tibet, the Dalai Lama's Tibet, was to retain complete effective autonomy under a nominal Chinese suzerainty. Inner Tibet, the remaining ethnic Tibetan parts of Kham, was to be controlled as follows: "Nothing in the present Convention shall be held to prejudice the existing rights of the Tibetan Government in Inner Tibet, which include the power to select and appoint the high priests of monasteries and to retain full control in all matters affecting religious institutions." Second, China agreed not to convert Outer Tibet into a province or to interfere in its internal administration. China would send no troops or officials to Outer Tibet except for an amban and his escort of 300 men. Britain also agreed to station in Tibet only those troops agreed to in the Tibet-British Convention of 1904 (a small escort for the trade agents). The British trade agent at Gyantse could, however, visit Lhasa with his escort whenever necessary to consult with the Tibetan government.

Third, Tibet, in turn, was not to consider China to be a foreign country. And, fourth, China and Great Britain agreed not to negotiate with each other, or with any other power, regarding Tibet. Differences between Tibet and China that related to the Convention would be referred to the British government "for equitable adjustment."

In addition to the actual Convention section, "Notes" contained important items. For example, it was understood that Tibet would form a part of China; after the Tibetan government selected and installed a Dalai Lama, the Chinese government was to be notified and the Chinese representative in Lhasa would "formally communicate to His Holiness the titles consistent with his dignity, which have been conferred by the Chinese Government"; and the selection and appointment of all officers in Outer Tibet were to rest with the Tibetan government, and Outer Tibet would not be represented in the Chinese Parliament or in any other similar body.

The British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries were willing to sign the draft accord, but I-fan Chen, the Chinese plenipotentiary, refused. After considerable pressure from the British, he initialed the draft and then referred it to his government, which immediately repudiated his initialing. China could accept the political aspects of Outer Tibet's status but was totally unwilling to agree to the border delimitation, which meant giving up control of important ethnic Tibetan territories such as Chamdo. This left Britain and Tibet the only players.

The tripartite agreement, however, was only part of the British agenda. There were also two separate agreements with Tibet, both of which were highly favorable to British interests. One, dealing with trade, gave the British, among other things, extraterritorial powers in the trade marts, complete control over the lines of communication between the trade marts and the Indian border, and access to all of Tibet for British traders, while prohibiting the Tibetans from establishing commercial monopolies or placing other restrictions on British merchants. It also continued to bind the Tibetan government to Article IV of the Lhasa Convention of 1904, in which Tibet agreed not to levy tariffs or dues without British permission. The other agreement dealt with the Indo-Tibetan border east of Bhutan. It moved the frontier from the foothills of the Himalayas to its crests, ceding to India the large segment of Tibetan territory that was called the Northeast Fron-

tier Agency and is now named Arunachal Pradesh (see Map 7). Also known as the McMahon Line, after the British plenipotentiary who negotiated it, this boundary is still contested by China.

Sir Charles Bell summed up the advantages obtained by India at Simla as follows:

> 1. The Chinese may not send troops to Outer Tibet or station civil or military officials there with the exception of the Chief Official and his escort. "Chinese pressure is thus withdrawn from the frontier of India, from Kashmir to Assam—some 1,500 miles."
>
> 2. The Chinese and Tibetan governments may not enter into any direct negotiations or agreements with one another regarding Tibet.
>
> 3. The cancellation of Article III of the Convention of 1906 between Great Britain and China opens the way for Britain to obtain concessions in Tibet. Also, favorable new trade regulations insures Great Britain the same treatment as China in regard to trade.
>
> 4. The British trade agent in Gyantse has the right to visit Lhasa whenever necessary and to communicate directly with the Tibetan government without the need to go through the Chinese.
>
> 5. The Simla agreement includes "the cession by Tibet to us [Britain] of the Tawang district, a country with an area of some 2,000 square miles, and much of it fertile. Also the cession of other tracts of Tibetan territory bordering on the territories of the hill tribes of the north-east frontier. We have thus been able to form buffer territories along the whole northern frontier of Assam, between it and Tibet."[10]

The British officials at Simla, eager to secure these gains, signed a separate agreement with Tibet binding both to the terms of the unsigned Simla Convention. This bilateral agreement also excluded China from all rights accruing to it in the draft accord until China accepted all its terms. This solution secured the British gains without Chinese

10. IOR, L/PS/10/344, memorandum no. 167E, from Bell to the secretary of the Foreign and Political Department, Government of India, dated 6 August 1915.

agreement. Tibet, however, once again had to face the possibility that China might initiate military action.

Not surprisingly, feeling was strong in Lhasa that Shatra had given up too much. The Dalai Lama himself was unhappy and later asked Bell, "Why was Tibet divided into two, Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet, at the Simla Conference?"[11] When World War I began, Lhasa came to fear that China would try to take advantage of Britain's preoccupation with Europe to renew military activities against Tibet. Therefore in 1914, at the request of the Tibetan government, Britain sold it 5,000 rifles and half a million rounds of ammunition.[12] Though this was a great help, it could not defend Tibet from an all-out Chinese attack. In September 1915, with pressure mounting in Tibet to open bilateral negotiations with China, Tsarong was sent to talk with Bell in Sikkim. These internal pressures are revealed in a letter Shatra wrote to Bell asking him to help Tsarong:

> The Chinese are making every effort to conciliate the Tibetan Chiefs and soldiers in Kham, and the ignorant people are being deceived into thinking that, as the Treaty could not be concluded in India, the Tibetan Government might as well conclude it with the Chinese direct, especially when the latter are now so friendly. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his high officials, having regard to the great kindness of the British Government who have rendered them much help, have so far refused to listen to any overture on the part of the Chinese. It is doubtful, however, how things will end, if the question remains protracted, as at present. The people, who are of diverse minds, are suffering much trouble by having to supply labour and troops. The Government is also hard pressed by having to spend a lot of money in paying the soldiers. . Kindly help us in whatever way it may be possible after your discussion with the Shape. Our chief objective is the final conclusion of the treaty.[13]

Tsarong had three requests. He asked the British to try again to secure Chinese acceptance of the Simla terms, or, if this was impossible, at least to persuade them to withdraw their troops from the Tibetan

11. The Dalai Lama called Shatra to an interview at six A.M. and then made him wait until 5 P.M. before seeing him (Bell 1946: 206).
12. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 21.
13. IOR, L/PS/10/344, letter to Bell from Lönchen Shatra, dated 17 September 1915.

border so that the Tibetans could do likewise. The extraordinary expense of maintenance of close to 10,000 regular troops and militia in Kham required the Tibetan government to institute special levies from the monastic and aristocratic landlords to pay the costs, and these levies strained internal politics. As Bell put it in 1915:

> The Tibetan Government are at their wit's end to find the revenue necessary for paying their troops and administering their country. Their treasuries are depleted. For the last few years, until the current year, the crops were bad and the State granaries were depleted likewise. They have taken no loan from us as Mongolia has from Russia. It is imperative that they should raise funds immediately.[14]

Tsarong therefore also sought economic assistance. He informed Bell of Tibet's intention to levy a tax of 1.4 rupees per load of wool, yak hair, and yak tails, and requested Indian acquiescence.[15]

Tsarong's third request concerned upgrading Tibet's army and modernizing the country. He asked Bell for a supply of mountain guns and machine guns; for the loan of three or four mechanics to teach Tibetans how to make safe and reliable ammunition (the ammunition the Tibetans were then making in Lhasa was unsatisfactory); and for assistance in the construction of a telegraph line between Lhasa and Gyantse.

Bell understood the situation and had already, unbeknownst to the Tibetans, conveyed their point of view to Delhi:

> The Tibetan Government have done what it could. Though now at war almost continually for eleven years, first with Great Britain and then with China, they maintain some ten thousand men in Eastern Tibet to keep the Chinese soldiers from advancing further. To all threats and inducements they have given straightforward replies, asking the Chinese Government to recognise the Convention, which the Chinese Plenipotentiary initialled. Their men are not trained or equipped as are the Chinese troops, they have no cannon, no mountain guns, no machine guns. Still they have done what they could, and so far they have kept the Chinese back.

14. IOR, L/PS/10/344, letter no. 291EC, from Bell in Sikkim to the Government of India in Delhi, dated 28 October 1915.

15. Ibid.

. . . It seems, therefore, to the Tibetans that the Government of India, while objecting to the monopoly in Tibet, have established a monopoly in India. The Simla Convention required the withdrawal of the Chinese troops from Outer Tibet. So far from this having been effected, these troops threaten Lhasa itself. The Tibetan Government, therefore, feel that our Government, while unable to render the Convention operative in its most important aspects, have not hesitated to take advantage for themselves under cover of it. .

The Tibetan Government feel also that in minor matters the Government of India's dealings with them are apt to be—though no doubt unintentionally—somewhat lacking in courtesy. .

The question then arises whether we are doing all that is possible in the present circumstances to give the Tibetans their dues under this Convention, which we ourselves have concluded. It seems to me that there are at least two things we can do. Firstly we can allow them to levy a simple customs tariff on exports from Tibet to India at (say) one rupee per maund of wool and on other articles at similarly moderate rates. The Tibetans feel they have a better right to tax their own commodities going out than foreign commodities coming in. The tariff would be temporary and would be terminable whenever the Government of India so decreed. Its object would be to help the Tibetan Government to tide over this period, during which—from no fault of their own—their finances are subjected to an exceptionally severe strain. We should, therefore, offer them a tariff to the above extent. The war and its consequences have radically altered the state of affairs that obtained at the Simla Conference, when we refused to agree to a customs tariff.

Secondly, we should allow them to procure a few machine guns and mountain guns. *China, whom we are endeavoring to restrain, has plenty of these. It is difficult to understand why we should prevent Tibet, for whom we are at present working, from buying a few. If we cannot sell them out of our own stock, we should permit Tibet to purchase from Japan or [some] other country. .we cannot profess real friendship for Tibet if, in spite of her frequent requests, we continue to prevent her from buying guns, which we permit (for we cannot prevent) her enemy China to obtain in large quantities.*

I trust that the two foregoing recommendations will seem moderate to the Government of India. They constitute the minimum that we should do for Tibet in her present emergency. If we do not help her now, there is a very real and serious danger that she may fall under the complete domination of China and that we may be faced anew in an aggra-

> vated form with those dangers, which the Simla Convention was intended to obviate.[16]

The Government of India's response to Bell's plea was extremely negative and almost insulting.

> The Government of India have read with interest your summary of the advantages gained by Tibet and ourselves under the Simla Convention, but that interest is necessarily purely academic since the Simla Convention has not been signed by the Chinese Government or accepted by the Russian Government and is, therefore, for the present invalid. It is true that by the secret Anglo-Tibetan Declaration, which recognized the Convention as binding on Great Britain and Tibet, certain advantages under the Convention have been obtained by both parties, but no useful purpose can be gained at present by an examination of those respective advantages. The fact remains that the negotiations conducted last year in Simla broke down simply and solely, because the Government of India attempted to secure for Tibet greater advantages than the Chinese Government were prepared to concede, and the fact that China has persisted in her refusal to sign the Convention can only be regarded as an indication that both the Government of India and the Tibetan Plenipotentiary, Lonchen Shatra, were unduly anxious to secure the best terms they could for Tibet. *That this failure, therefore, should be regarded in Tibet as to the discredit of either the British Government or the Tibetan Plenipotentiary would appear to show a curious want of logic on the part of the Tibetans generally.*
>
> Turning to the actual proposals put forward in your letter, the Government of India are unable to see any necessity for action at present. The Tibetan Government have apparently made no recent request to you either in regard to a tariff or to munitions of war. They are, so far as our information goes, engaged in secret negotiations with China with a view to concluding a separate agreement. Spontaneous concessions on our part at this juncture would not in all probability put a stop to those negotiations, while they would almost certainly be regarded as a sign of anxiety on our part and lead to more embarrassing demands.
>
> the Government of India are not inclined, at the present time of

16. IOR, L/PS/10/344, letter no. 167EC, from Bell to the Government of India, Delhi, dated 6 August 1915 (emphasis added).

> grave pre-occupation, to take up so complicated a question as the levy of a customs tariff on exports from Tibet to India. This question would not only involve the examination of all the conditions along the whole length of the Indo-Tibetan frontier but would necessitate a consideration of the trade relations between Tibet and Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Further, if a tariff were to be permitted, the Government of India would require some guarantee that it would be levied in such a manner as to preclude abuse and corruption, which could only result in hardship to individuals and the strangling of Indo-Tibetan trade. Such a guarantee would not in all probability be forthcoming.
>
> As regards the procuring of machine guns and mountain guns for Tibet, in view of the fact that there is a serious shortage of machine guns in the main theatres of war and that the Government of India cannot secure sufficient for their own needs, it is out of the question at present to contemplate the purchase of them for the Tibetan Government. . . It must be obvious, even to the Tibetan Government, that at such a time as the present the Government of India are not likely to be inclined to procure munitions of war for others when they have troops engaged in so many theatres of war themselves.
>
> The present view of the Government of India is that we must mark time and await developments in Tibet. If the Tibetan Government succeed in negotiating a Treaty with China, which is in itself unobjectionable from our point of view, there would appear to be no reason why such a Treaty should not be embodied in a fresh Tripartite Convention and accepted by the British Government. If on the other hand the Tibetan Government conclude an objectionable Treaty with China, we should have ample justification, under our existing engagements with Tibet, to repudiate it and demand its cancellation on pain of the withdrawal of our support and such other action as might be deemed advisable. If, however, no separate agreement should be arrived at between China and Tibet, things must remain for the time being in *status quo,* the Tibetan Government being assured should occasion arise of our continued diplomatic support.[17]

A minute paper added another objection: "One objection to allowing them [Tibet] to purchase machine guns in India is the attitude of the

17. IOR, L/PS/10/344, letter no. 448EB, from the foreign secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department to Bell, dated 3 September 1915.

Nepal Durbar, which protested on a previous occasion against our arming the Tibetans."[18]

This response reveals a fundamental British ambivalence toward Tibet that persisted until the end of the Lamaist State in 1951. British officers on the spot were always highly sympathetic to the needs and concerns of the Tibetan government; the Government of India in Delhi was less concerned; and His Majesty's Government in London generally cited strategic interests that were more important than Tibet's.

When Bell conveyed the impossibility of Britain or India supplying machine guns, Tsarong told Bell he could buy older-model guns through private Calcutta gunsmiths and asked whether he could get an export license for these.[19] In November 1915, Tsarong again wrote, urging Bell to help:

> This letter is submitted by Tsarong Shape. On the 29th day of the 9th month (6 November 1915) I have received news from my Government to the effect that information received by them from Kham show that Phin Tungling [General Pen] has returned bringing with him cannon, machine guns, Chikar Bou, etc., and is making preparations for hostility. Also that Msai Utang will soon be coming to treat for peace but, if no settlement is then arrived at, Phin, assisted by some other Tunglings, will advance and attack us. The Chinese are very cunning and may come upon us all of a sudden. For want of proper arms, we Tibetans are not prepared for a sudden attack from the Chinese, which may continue for many days and months together. As I have not received any definite reply to the requests made by me, both personally and, later on, in writing, I telegraphed to Mr. Macdonald [the Gyantse trade agent] asking him to remind you of this. Kindly favour me now with a reply.
>
> As regards the machine guns, I telegraphed to a Calcutta firm called Lyon and I have recently received a reply stating that they will quote prices after hearing from Europe. I will let you know the details (of the transaction) later on. The attitude of the Chinese being as stated above, we want the machine guns soon. In order therefore to obtain the license

18. IOR, L/PS/10/344, minute paper of Foreign and Political Department of Government of India, February 1916.
19. IOR, L/PS/10/344, letter no. 291EC, from Bell in Sikkim to the Government of India in Delhi, dated 28 October 1915.

> for the purchase and export (from India) of the machine guns as quickly as possible, please apply to the Government now, if you think it desirable. *The hope of Tibet is in no one but the great British Government. We are very anxious to get the guns soon, and we do not know what might happen.* Kindly know this.[20]

Delhi then agreed to Tibet's internal taxation of wool but not to Tibet's private purchase of machine guns. It stated simply that "circumstances do not as yet justify a reconsideration" of this policy.[21]

A year and a half later, in 1917, Tibetan fears were realized: conflict broke out in Kham after the Chinese made military advances in the area of Riwoche. The Tibetans, armed with their new British rifles, struck back, and within a year had recaptured Chamdo and areas east of the Upper Yangtse, such as Derge, that China had held at the time of Simla. The British intervened diplomatically and the truce of Rongbatse was signed in 1918 by the local Tibetan and Chinese officials. The terms of the truce moved the border eastward to the Upper Yangtse River, with the exception of Derge, which extended to the east of that river but was controlled by Tibet. This major victory for the Tibetan forces, who could have driven on to Litang and Nyarong had they wished, was attributed by both the Tibetans and the British to the 5,000 modern British rifles the troops possessed.[22]

After this military success, the Tibetan government once again urged the British to pressure China to settle outstanding issues in accordance with the Simla Convention. The British agreed, and in May 1919 the Chinese made a new proposal. Although it was based on the terms of Simla, it was completely unrealistic. It incorporated a number of Tibetan areas originally classified as Inner Tibet into the Chinese province of Szechuan, and it stated that Chinese officials would be posted at the trade marts in Tibet. The Tibetans rejected this proposal outright; the British objected to the posting of more Chinese officials in Tibet; and,

20. IOR, L/PS/10/344, letter from Tsarong to Bell, dated 8 November 1915 (emphasis added).

21. IOR, L/PS/10/344, letter no. 196D, from the deputy secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department to Bell, dated 18 January 1916. The tax issue was part of a trade agreement signed at the same time.

22. Teichman 1922: 52–58.

ultimately, the terms aroused strong public opposition in China as well.[23]

In the meantime, Tibet pressed the British to sell them machine guns and artillery. Britain again refused, arguing internally that they feared it would made Tibet too strong vis-à-vis China and could lead to Tibetan aggression and independence.

Richardson summed up Tibet's disappointment with the events of the year 1919 cogently:

> For Tibet the year had followed a too familiar pattern, and disappointment at the failure to bring the Chinese to terms was made the more bitter by our [the British] repeated refusal to provide the Tibetan Government with arms, or to allow them to import any through India. The Government of India had been anxious to sell the Tibetan Government two machine guns and a quarter of a million rounds of ammunition, but it was decided by His Majesty's Government that the new Arms Traffic Regulations made this impossible.[24]

These disappointments undoubtedly raised serious doubts in the minds of the Dalai Lama and other officials about the reliability of Britain as a supporter.

The need to maintain a strong military force in Kham had virtually emptied the rest of Tibet of troops, leaving only 500 Bodyguard Regiment troops in Lhasa and a few small units stationed near Nepal. The vulnerability this engendered was shown in 1920 when a dispute broke out between Tibetan and Nepalese traders in Lhasa. The Tibetans retaliated by denying the Nepalese traders yak dung for fuel, and the Nepalese government in turn threatened to invade Tibet unless the Tibetan government made adequate arrangements for their subjects.[25] Since it could not withdraw its troops from Kham, Tibet had to back down.

In 1920, therefore, Tsarong proposed to increase the Tibetan army threefold, raising about 15,000 new troops.[26] At this point the economic implications of a strong military became apparent. Raising new

23. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 23–24.
24. Ibid.
25. Bell 1968: 236.
26. IOR, MS.Eur. F.80.5d, letter from Bell in Lhasa to Government of India, New Delhi, dated 26 May 1921.

revenue in Tibet was not a simple task. The Tibetan serf-based system of production meant that the majority of arable land was divided into estates held by lay and religious lords who paid taxes to the government but typically possessed ancient documents that gave them various concessions and put a ceiling on the amount they paid. In the past this had been of little importance because the Tibetan central government had had little need for large revenues. Its lay officials received income from their manorial estates and required only token salaries. The government did not maintain a national police force or internal postal services, and it kept only a very small permanent military force which, in any case, served as a corvée tax obligation. Most of the government's income was earmarked not for government activities but, rather, for religious ceremonies. The traditional Tibetan government *needed* little income because it *did* little.

Since arable land in Tibet was already allocated, increasing land revenue in Tibet meant taking larger amounts from the aristocratic and monastic lords. This struck at the very fabric of the laissez-faire serf political economy, for these lords had either to extract more from their own serfs or to accept lowered income themselves. One alternative was to impose custom duties and levies. London and Delhi, however, exercising their rights from the Lhasa Convention and the Simla Agreement, steadfastly refused to permit this. A 1924 exchange between the Kashag and the British reveals this clearly:

> The reason of sending this letter by the Ministers of Tibet. In order to make Tibet, which is the country of Buddhism, stronger, we have been enlisting new troops every year. To meet the heavy expenditure on the maintenance of the army and communications (road making, etc.) and for the benefit of both the British and Tibetan Governments, we find it absolutely necessary to levy customs duty. Article 9 of the Trade Regulations, which was concluded on the 3rd July 1914 (corresponding to the 10th day of the 5th month of the Wood Tiger Year) between Britain, China[27] and Tibet says that if any of the contracting parties desire to revise the said Regulations, notice to this effect should be given within six months after the end of the first ten years and that if none have any

27. The Tibetans were surprisingly mistaken on this point: China did not sign or initial the Simla Trade Agreement.

desire to revise them, the Regulations will remain in force for another ten years. When you came to Lhasa and met us in person, we requested you to make an arrangement by virtue of which we can collect customs duty from all traders who import merchandise from India into Tibet. To this you had been good enough to reply that you would, for the benefit of Tibet, send a report to the great British Government and would write to us on the subject later, but so far we have not been favored with any intimation about the matter. The Tsarong Shape, who is at present there, might remind you about this. We would therefore pray that you will kindly submit at an early date such a report to the great British Government as we can attain our object.

Usual ending.
Seal of the Ministers of Tibet.[28]

The British, as in the past, responded negatively, telling F. M. Bailey, the political officer in Sikkim, that the government had once again "sympathetically considered the question, but regret that they have found no way of getting over the difficulty of allowing the Tibetan Government to charge an import duty without compromising the right to most favored nation treatment which India possesses under Article VI of the Convention of 1914. For India to impose a similar tax would not remove the objection, nor in itself have any advantage." It further informed Bailey that "the letter of the Tibetan Government appears to be a request for the revision of the Trade regulations of 1914 as is provided for in Article IX, but the revision could only extend to matters dealt with in them and not to a right which is separately secured to us by the main Convention. You should, therefore as you propose, explain to the Tibetan Government the reasons which make it impossible for the Government of India to agree to an import tax on Indian goods so long as it is not also placed on the goods of all other countries."[29] The British would not, however, accept Tibetan assurances that the import tax would also be imposed on the Chinese border, because they felt that

28. IOR, *L/PS/12/4186A*, translation of letter from *Tibetan Kashag* to *F. M. Bailey*, the political officer in Sikkim, dated 28 December 1924 and enclosed in his letter to the Government of India.
29. IOR, L/PS/12/4186A, letter from the deputy secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 31 July 1925.

the Tibetan government did not have the administrative capability to manage this. Although this issue was finally partially resolved in 1929, when the Government of India agreed to permit Tibet to impose a customs tariff of up to 5 percent ad valorem on the Indo-Tibetan border,[30] during the critical period of the early 1920s, the British refused to allow Tibet to raise new revenue through such duties.

The Tibetan government was therefore forced to extract new revenues from the traditional estate-holders. In 1920–1921, the Dalai Lama created a new office, the Revenue Investigation Office, to investigate the various sources of government revenue and design new ways to generate income.[31] This new office levied a famous new tax on all religious and aristocratic estates and instituted a number of reforms that vastly increased the Tibetan government's income. For example, a number of important landholding families paid taxes to larger aristocratic families such as the Sambo, rather than to the central government. The Revenue Investigation Office made many of these families independent of their overlord and instructed them to pay their land taxes to the central government. Similarly, during the period 1923–1929, estates throughout Central Tibet were visited to reassess their taxes. The Revenue Investigation Office also made detailed surveys of the status of many estates. They took back a number: either the family to whom the estate had been granted had died out, or a monastery held it without a valid claim. In many of these cases, the current holder was charged back taxes.

The case of the Sambo family reveals the tremendous potential for revenue that the government had ignored. The Revenue Investigation Office informed the Sambo family that they would have to pay an additional tax of 2,500 *ke* of grain annually (roughly forty-one tons). The enormity of this levy shocked the family. They appealed the decision to the government, arguing that it was impossible for them to pay such a tax since their serfs and subjects had documents signed and sealed by past Dalai Lamas which specifically precluded increasing their taxes.

30. IOR, L/PS/12/4186A, letter from the deputy secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 20 June 1929.

31. The driving force behind this office was Tsipön Lungshar, one of Tibet's most able and farsighted lay officials. His background is discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

The Revenue Investigation Office informed Sambo that all these past concessions and exemptions were no longer valid.

When he had exhausted all avenues of appeal, Sambo took leave from the government for about a year and went to his estates to reassess and restructure the land and taxes of each. He found, much to his surprise, that he could easily increase his revenue and, in the end, actually raised 30,000–40,000 additional *ke* of grain (495–660 tons). He thus ended up making a huge profit even after paying the 5,000 *ke* that was by then due in new taxes.[32]

Finances, however, were not the only problem facing the development of a strong army. Such a force would clearly tip the balance of power in Tibet against the monastic segment. In the next chapter, a critically important confrontation between the monastic segment and the military is examined.

32. Sambo, interview.

3

THE DALAI LAMA, THE ARMY, AND THE MONASTIC SEGMENT

Tsarong's proposal to triple the Tibetan army generated a classic confrontation among three major factions. The first faction, a group of military commanders led by Tsarong, the commander-in-chief, were committed to Tibetan independence from China.[1] They believed that military strength, not the prayers of the monks, had paved the way for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet in 1912. Relatively young, energetic, and modern in their attitude, they possessed an esprit de corps unique in Tibet. Because they were committed to modernization, others considered them to be a threat to the religious domination of the Gelugpa State. Ostentatious in their adoption of Western (British) uniforms (see Figure 9), dress, and customs such as sweet tea, shaking hands, and playing tennis and polo, and generally secular in orientation and demeanor, the commanders appeared to challenge the very essence of the monastery-dominated political system. Tsarong once sarcastically told Sir Charles Bell that raising additional troops was easy; all the government had to do was to remove the thousands of useless *dobdo* ("fighting") monks from the Three Seats.[2] This type of outspoken

1. A commander (*depön*) headed a battalion consisting of roughly 500 soldiers.

2. Some years later, Tsarong once invited the abbots of the Three Seats to his house. In the course of the party, he showed them his chapel room. They expressed amazement that he had so many statues and religious texts since they had believed he was basically irreligious (Tsarong [Rimshi], interview). Surkhang Depön exemplified the radical officers' view in his treatise setting out the structure for a new Tibet under a republican form of government. This work was destroyed by his son after the fall of Lungshar in 1934;



9.

Leading military and lay/monk officials (ca. 1920–1923) (Tsarong, seated sixth from left)
(photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

secularism alienated the military commanders from the monks and their supporters.

The apparent unity of purpose and camaraderie of the military commanders made them an extraordinarily dangerous force in Tibetan politics. Although not a political party in the normal sense, they shared the view that the ultra-conservative monks had brought Tibet to its knees in the past and would do so again unless the central government developed its own power.

The power of the military derived predominantly from Tsarong's unique position. Simultaneously he held the three important posts of shape, commander-in-chief, and head of the Tibetan mint and armory. Even more important, he was one of the Dalai Lama's closest favorites, almost a member of his family. Though he had acquired through marriage the name of an important aristocratic family, his position was due, rather, to the 13th Dalai Lama's policy of advancing those he personally trusted. But the military faction's dependence on the Dalai Lama for its power was also its weakness. Their views and attitudes did not represent basic changes in Tibetan society. They commanded no popular support, and they did not attempt to win such support.

The second main faction, represented by the Three Seats, was vehemently opposed to the proposed expansion of the army and to most other forms of modernization or change. Their primary loyalty was to Buddhism and the Gelugpa monastic order rather than to any nationalistic entity called Tibet. They were committed to the Tibetan government only so long as it furthered the interests of the Gelugpa sect's version of Tibetan Buddhism. For the monks, Tibet was a uniquely Buddhist country whose religious character had to be maintained at all costs. They also believed that they were the ones most qualified to determine what was in the best interests of religion.

From the monastic point of view, military expansion cut right to the heart of their traditional power, draining resources that otherwise went to the monastic system and also neutralizing the coercive force of the

he feared that if the manuscript were found in their house the family would be accused of trying to overthrow the government and would lose their estates and position (Chunden Drogar, interview), based on comments by her uncle, the late Surkhang Shape).



10.

Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo (on left)

large numbers of uneducated and fighting monks. They saw Tsarong's proposal as a shift to secularism, to the diffusion of alien (and heathen) British ideas which would harm Buddhism by creating an aristocracy less inclined to act as patrons of the monasteries. For the monks, nothing less than Tibet's unique theocratic political system and the dominant position of the monastic segment were at stake.

A third faction was comprised of conservative government officials. Led by the powerful and stern Drönyerchemmo Temba Dargye (commonly known as Ara gaapo ["white beard"]; see Figure 10), and including a number of important monk and lay officials such as Kusantse Shape, this faction's interests fell between the other two. While committed to maintaining, if not actually strengthening, the central government, they were also committed to the view of Tibet as a religious state under the Dalai Lama; thus, they too were extremely apprehensive about the pro-Western military faction. They opposed the excessive power of the monastic segment, but they shared the monastic fear

that a large and powerful army would create economic hardship and tilt the balance of power toward the hands of the young, radical group officers who fostered Western customs.

As the 1920s began, feelings ran high. The military officers' often ostentatious adoption of the customs of the heathen British made it seem that they were bent on discarding the traditional culture. The Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo used to delight in referring to them as monkeys, because one could see their legs when, in place of the traditional Tibetan robe, they wore their Western uniforms.

Several Lhasa street songs from this time reflect the resentment and disdain many Tibetans felt at the penetration of British customs and ideas not only into the military but also into the general populace:

> Drinking sweet tea [in teashops]
> is a sign you have no house.
> [Wearing] the brocade hat with two flaps
> is a sign [a woman] has no headdress [and is poor].[3]
>
> Putting on rouge and makeup
> is a sign [a woman] is ugly.
> Eating *khogön* [flat bread]
> is a sign you have no *tsamba* [i.e., are poor].[4]

Eating *khogön,* a flat bread made from flour, drinking sweet milk-tea in restaurants, wearing makeup, and abandoning the large traditional woman's headdress all symbolized to many Tibetans the deterioration of traditional values and customs.

Three pivotal incidents involving the three factions occurred between 1921 and 1924. The first occurred in 1921 and, for the first time, caused the Dalai Lama to consider the threat a large army might pose to his position.

Tsarong's proposal to increase the Tibetan army was supported independently by Sir Charles Bell, who arrived in Lhasa in November 1920 at the invitation of the Dalai Lama. Bell informally advised the

3. In Tibetan: *gsol ja mngar mo bzhes mkhan / gzims shag med pa'i bzo red / dbu zhwa tshe ring dkyil 'khor / dbu 'phrugs med pa'i rtags red.*

4. In Tibetan: *dkar po dmar po byug mkhan / rnam pa med pa'i rtags red / bzhes pag kog khun bzhes mkhan / gsol zhib med pa'i rtags red.*

Dalai Lama that to protect Tibet's borders from China effectively, he would have to increase the Tibetan army to about 15,000.[5]

A proposal to increase the military was eventually placed before the National Assembly, where it met with strong monastic opposition. This opposition is reflected in the comments made to a British official in 1921 by an important monastic official:

> The Tibetans have heard that the Tibetan Government wants to raise 15,000 troops with a view to defending themselves against Chinese aggression. It is believed that you [Bell] gave this advice. The people are unwilling to agree to this proposal and say what benefit would they derive by making friends with the British if they have got to raise an army and fight the Chinese.
>
> The Kusho [Chamön Depa] thinks there would be no objection to raising about 500 troops in Kham every year and trained for service. He, however, thinks that even an army of 20,000 troops cannot keep back the Chinese, should they invade Tibet at any future time when all their internal troubles are settled. But he says that if the Chinese attack Tibet, every monk and layman will fight to the last and they expect some military assistance from the British Government.[6]

The monks were willing to put up with a British connection if it relieved the external danger which was being used to justify a military buildup; they were thus very anxious to see the Simla Treaty signed and sealed by the three governments as soon as possible.[7] It was universally held at this time that Britain was letting Tibet down by failing to force China to come to terms.

Bell himself, realizing the strong opposition of the monastic segment, sent a message to the Dalai Lama through the Gyantse trade agent David MacDonald on 19 or 20 January which advised increasing the army only gradually, by 500 to 1,000 people per year; recruiting soldiers from outlying areas; and not financing this action by taking back estates from the monasteries or aristocrats. The Dalai Lama had

5. Bell 1946: 249.

6. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.80/5a/42, letter from D. MacDonald (Gyantse trade agent, then in Lhasa) to Bell (en route), dated 4 January 1921, quoting Chamön Depa of Sera monastery.

7. Ibid., quoting Chamön Depa of Sera.

come to the same conclusions and informed MacDonald that "he is very pleased with . . [Bell's] proposal."[8]

On 25 January 1921 the Dalai Lama told Bell that the National Assembly had proposed that 500 or 600 troops should be added yearly until the total number reached 17,000, or roughly a twenty-year buildup.[9] This was a far cry from Tsarong's original plan, but it was enough to create a very tense and volatile situation in Lhasa. The Tibetan New Year was to begin in a few weeks, on 8 February. It was widely feared that fighting would break out between the soldiers and monks during the Great Prayer Festival, when about 20,000 monks would be in Lhasa, which was under the control of Drepung monastery. Many families sent their valuables for safety to the countryside. Rumors abounded that the British were sending troops to support the Tibetan army against the monasteries, and posters were put up telling people to kill Bell and Lt. Col. R. S. Kennedy, a physician in the Indian Medical Service who had accompanied Bell.[10] This behavior infuriated the Dalai Lama, who issued an order to the Lhasa magistrates (the *mipön*):

> Why are people hiding away their valuables? A sahib has come to Lhasa with the object of making a treaty. The British are not going to make war on Tibet, let me know which nation is going to do so. Or if there is going to be a civil war in Tibet itself, I require to be told who is going to make such war. But if there is not going to be fighting, why are people hiding their property without cause? Every householder must sign a written statement for my perusal, stating whether he has sent away his property or not.[11]

Despite the bravado, the Dalai Lama himself was nervous about what the monks might do during the Mönlam Festival. He told Bell:

> The mass of the monks do not consider their actions; they act without thinking (lit. "act straight on"). I am always afraid that they will cause bloodshed at the great festivals in Lhasa. . when thousands are col-

8. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.80/5a.42, letter from D. MacDonald (in Lhasa) to Bell (en route), dated 20 January 1921.
9. Bell 1946: 251.
10. Ibid.: 276.
11. Ibid.: 277.

> lected, it is difficult to say afterwards who had started a fight. I am thinking of employing soldiers this time to keep the peace.[12]

Bell conveys the atmosphere of tension at the Butter-Sculpture Festival in Lhasa on the fifteenth of the Tibetan First Month.

> Tsa-rong now arrives in a highly excited condition. While walking by the Dalai Lama's side with the other Ministers he felt safe. But being so strongly hated by the monks, he felt afraid to return to his house with only one or two servants. . . . he feared lest a monk in one of the dark little rooms should assassinate him from behind. Tsarong is greatly upset and full of fear on our account also. He carries a loaded revolver, which he presses Kennedy to take, but the latter declines. He sends a dozen soldiers with us. The Peak Secretary [the Dalai Lama's ADC] now arrives and is also nervous for our safety, thinking it risky for us to go round. So he takes half a dozen stalwart monks armed with thick poles. Our clerks, too, . . . unknown to me also carry loaded revolvers.
>
> Later on, the Dalai Lama told me that—apparently on Tsa-rong's suggestion—he ordered that soldiers as well as a guard of monks should go round with us, though he himself considered that a guard of monks was sufficient. The latter, he said, was necessary, as monks are headstrong, and one never knows what may happen with numbers of them at night.[13]

In order to minimize the likelihood of violence, the Dalai Lama made Lhasa off limits to the military, and he warned the abbots and other monastic leaders that the monks must be kept under strict control. He threatened that if fighting were to break out, the monasteries would suffer and their officials would be severely punished. The Great Prayer Festival of 1921 passed without incident, but military-monk tensions remained high.

Immediately following the New Year's celebrations, in early March, the National Assembly returned to the issue of the growth of the military. During one session on raising income for the new regiments—particularly on whether this should come from the estates traditionally given as income to the army commanders and shapes[14]—the anti-

12. Ibid.
13. Bell 1946: 283–85. The Butter-Sculpture Festival is named for the huge painted butter figures placed on triangular wooden frames over which leather has been stretched.
14. In Tibetan such estates are called *dashi* and *gashi*.

military clique arranged to exclude all military officers as delegates. This outraged the army officers.[15] They met at the Bodyguard Regiment Headquarters, and Tshögaw, the wildest and most fearless of the commanders, complained bitterly that

> the Assembly is discussing [the future of the military] in that meeting and there is not even one military officer present. It must be because they are going to create extra income out of the estates of the commanders and they thought that we would protest if we were present. However, Sambo [an aristocrat with an extremely large number of estates] was invited to attend and he has been made secretary of the assembly meeting [implying that he would be able to deflect attempts to impose new taxes on the large aristocratic families who could most easily afford to pay more]. Since we do not know why we were not invited to attend, it is better that we go to the assembly meeting and ask one of the tsipöns why.[16]

To confront the assembly about the choice of delegates was unprecedented and highly provocative. It could only be seen as a grave challenge to governmental authority. Greeted by only a nervous silence from the other officers, the hotheaded Tshögaw scolded his colleagues: "It is not only the question of the commanders' estates being lost to us now, but there is also the question of all the future commanders who will come after us and the military itself. It is better if we at least ask one of the tsipöns why not even one military officer has been invited to the meeting."[17]

The other officers finally agreed but decided to discuss the issue first with Tsarong. Tsarong concurred and added that while they were there they should call Gacan Demba, the former commander-in-chief, out of the meeting and tell him to come to Military Headquarters to give an

15. This account of the military officers' discussions derives primarily from Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms. He was one of the commanders at this time and a participant in the incident.

16. Ibid.

17. Tsipöns normally recommended to the Kashag the names of lay officials to participate in the National Assemblies. In an Abbreviated National Assembly such as this, officials were selected from all government strata (the fourth rank, fifth rank, etc.). There was, however, no tradition of selecting a representative specifically from among the military officers; they simply fell within the fourth-rank officials, and on this occasion, no military officers were selected to represent the fourth rank.

accounting of the guns and ammunition sent by the British after the Simla Convention (during his term of office). Tsarong had been sending queries about this but had received no answer. Gacan Demba at this time was acting as a secretary of the assembly.[18]

Seven military officers went together to the National Assembly and asked to see Chipisey (Ragashar), one of the newer tsipöns who, they felt, was not hostile to their position.[19] Unfortunately for them, he was absent that day, and in his place the powerful and very hostile Lungshar emerged.

Lungshar, like Tsarong, was a forward-thinking favorite of the Dalai Lama who was dedicated to developing a strong central government but did not like Tsarong's blatant bias toward the British. Viewing Tsarong as a major rival, he had tactically allied with the anti-military forces of the Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo.

The sudden appearance of a group of uniformed military commanders at the door of the assembly placed Lungshar on guard. After hearing what they wanted, he agreed to have seats put in the meeting for them. Had they accepted, Lungshar would of course have been able to say that they had threatened and compelled him to allow their participation. The officers, however, told him that they had not come to demand to be admitted but only to inquire why military officers had been excluded. Lungshar then revealed that the selection of the assembly members had not been done in the normal way, by the tsipöns, but had been made directly by the Kashag (of which Tsarong was a member). He suggested that if they wanted to find out why this had happened, they should speak with the Kashag.[20]

The commanders then called out former commander-in-chief Gacan Demba and asked him about the guns and ammunition. Irritated, he told them that he was busy attending the assembly but that all the rec-

18. Ibid.

19. The seven were commanders Thrumba, Doring, Shankawa, Tshögaw, and Salungpa, Captain Purdon, and Military Secretary Kesang.

20. Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.; Shakabpa (1967: 264) says, "The young generals, led by Tsarong, interrupted the meeting and demanded military representation." We find Shankawa's version more in keeping with Tibetan norms and therefore more likely. In any case, while they probably did not directly demand representation on the spot, in more general terms that is obviously what they were doing.

ords were kept in the army headquarters and could be examined without him.[21]

After leaving the assembly, the military officers went directly to Tsarong, who told them that he himself had not been attending the Kashag recently, due to his work at the Tibetan mint, but that if Lungshar said the assembly had been selected directly by the Kashag, it must be so.[22]

The incident did not end there. The anti-military faction now had something truly scandalous to report to the Dalai Lama. The Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo knew full well that the Dalai Lama was sensitive about his position and power, and he used the incident to kindle these fears.

The military officers' action also sent waves of talk and suspicion reverberating throughout Lhasa. Rumors spread that this might be the prelude to a coup or that the army might take action against specific opponents. The enemies of the military clique talked about the audacity of the military officers who had come uninvited to the National Assembly and ordered a secretary of the assembly to go to Military Headquarters. This action increased the growing apprehension toward this "foreign-oriented" military force.

Escalation of the incident occurred a few days later, when the leaders of the National Assembly informed Lönchen Sholkang that they had suspended their meetings because they feared the military would try to kill them.[23] This very serious charge by the anti-military forces cleverly forced the government to act.

Sholkang called all the military officers to his house the very next day to rebuke them:

> What are you people doing these days? Because of the kindness and compassion of the Dalai Lama, everybody is nice and quiet these days, so what are you military officers doing going to the Assembly and asking such questions? My God, that is something fantastic. What are you people trying to do?[24]

21. Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
22. Ibid.
23. These leaders were eight trungtsi officials and the representatives of Ganden, Drepung, and Sera monasteries.
24. Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.

They argued that they had not specifically called out Lungshar and that Gacan Demba had ignored a number of previous messages from the commander-in-chief's office. They assured the lönchen that they had no intention of threatening the assembly and asked him to try to mediate between the civil and military officials. Sholkang told the officers to return to their work, and for some time nothing more was heard about the incident. But the enemies of Tsarong and the military commanders were planning a second assault.

One day, without warning, the assembly representatives went to the Kashag and Lönchen Sholkang and reiterated their view that the military officers had acted in an anarchical and dangerous fashion by going to the assembly and asking for Lungshar. They also asserted strongly that the commanders had no respect for Tibetan laws and customs and were a danger to the government.

Tsarong did attend that Kashag meeting and later described his feelings to his fellow military officers. He thought he was going to be arrested right then and there and began to look around to see if he could escape. He could not, so he put his hand in his coat pocket, pretending he had a revolver there, and sat in an arrogant pose. As the tension reached an electrifying height, a message arrived telling Tsarong to come to the Dalai Lama at once.[25] There is no record of their meeting, but it appears that Tsarong explained his side of the events to the Dalai Lama and thereby alleviated some of the ruler's apprehensions.

Lhasa was now full of such rumors as that Tsarong was going to arrest Lungshar and that Lungshar had sought protection from the monasteries (who had, indeed, given Lungshar a bodyguard of fighting monks). People in Lhasa expected an open confrontation.

Soon after this, the lönchen arranged a face-to-face meeting between the military officers and the assembly representatives, with Lungshar and Shankawa each presenting their side. The military reiterated that they had broken no rules since they had not entered the assembly, but they apologized anyway. Lungshar and Shankawa came to an amicable

25. Ibid.

settlement and even shook hands, Western-style, to indicate their mutual satisfaction with the explanations.[26]

Just when all seemed settled, the volatile Tshögaw suddenly said loudly to Lungshar, "If you people have doubts and are suspicious about out intentions then it must mean that you all have something bad in your minds since we have no evil plans. It is because of what's in your minds that this has happened." Lungshar angrily replied, "Just now we received advice from the lönchen and we have followed this. Commander Shankawa has explained everything and this has cleared up all our doubts. But now, after we have finished our talks, you suddenly say that we had bad intentions and that this is why we had doubts. This is very serious because you are talking not on the street behind our backs but here in front of all the high authorities. This is very serious and fantastic." Tshögaw continued shouting and arguing. The lönchen's chief aide-de-camp, Gogpala, quickly told the other commanders to take Tshögaw and leave at once, but the damage had been done.

The next day the military officers were summoned to the house of the Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo, their key enemy among the monk officials. That the Dalai Lama had placed him in charge of the affair clearly indicated to all that the anti-military faction had prevailed. The Drönyerchemmo read them a statement, prepared by the leaders of the assembly, which called for the military to explain their actions:

> While the National Assembly was having a meeting about how to raise money to meet military expenses, military officers who were not members of the assembly came and asked questions and also called out Gacan Demba who was acting as a secretary of the assembly and asked him to hand over an accounting for guns, etc. All these events had been told to the lönchen Sholkang, and all the members of the National Assembly, fearing their lives, have sought the protection and support of the lönchen. The lönchen in turn called the military and civil officers to his house for a discussion and there the military officers expressed regret at what they had done and everyone had accepted their explanation. At that time Commander Tshögaw made some sarcastic remarks to Tsipön

26. Lungshar had lived in England in 1913–1914.

> Lungshar saying that Lungshar had bad feelings toward the military officers and that is why he has doubts about their intentions. If Tshögaw can say that much to Lungshar's face then this is like the saying that, "When the dog knows well about the stick, not only is he not scared by the stick but he can remove it and carry it himself." Such behavior will destroy the authority of the government if left unresolved. Moreover, the military officers have no experience in politics and are all young and look like little kids who have no understanding. To place weapons in the hands of such children is dangerous. Therefore, the National Assembly requests that all of these military officers be removed.[27]

The Drönyerchemmo went on to say insultingly that while normally officials would have to answer all of these points in detail and in writing, since the officers were not well versed in the Tibetan language and were all so young, the Dalai Lama had only asked them to state which officer first suggested going to confront the assembly.

Although put on the spot without warning, the army officers demonstrated their unity by defying the Drönyerchemmo and the Dalai Lama and steadfastly insisting that they could not remember who had initiated the idea and that it had been developed jointly. A few days later, the army officers received an order to attend the monk officials' daily tea ceremony (*trungja*) the next day. They arrived at 9 A.M. on 26 March 1921, wearing full military uniform.[28] After the second round of tea was served, the anti-military Kusantse Shape came out of the Dalai Lama's room, and an order from the Dalai Lama was read which demoted him as well as the military officers:

> Kalön [= Shape] Kheme [= Kusantse] has been acting with nepotism and even this time, although the members of the assembly are normally selected by the tsipöns, the Kashag gave the names of delegates and this created the entire problem. Moreover, making Sambo, who has huge estates, the secretary of the assembly when the question was how to create new income, made this very difficult to do. Consequently, you are now demoted to the rank of seynamba.[29]

27. Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
28. The date is cited by Bell (1946: 209); the rest is from Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.
29. Seynamba is a rank just below that of the fourth rank. It has no portfolio and represented a humiliating demotion for Kusantse.

> Commander Shankawa, you insisted that you could not name the person who first suggested that the military officers should go to the assembly meeting. Although this really requires a full and thorough inquiry, since you have served well as commander and have completed the construction of the Palace in the Bodyguard Regiment Headquarters, therefore you are demoted from the rank of commander but should remain as an ordinary lay official [*gyüma*]. You should carry on the duties of army commander until a new one is appointed. Tshögaw, you were appointed an army commander because you volunteered many times for [difficult] work. You did not get along well with the volunteer troops but still were appointed to the Trapchi Regiment. But again there you couldn't get along well with your colleagues so you were called here for inquiries and while under investigation, you made more trouble with the other military officers. And recently, when Lönchen Sholkang gave an explanation and everyone accepted his advice, again you told Lungshar that it was his own bad ideas that caused the trouble and used bad language. Because of this you are demoted to the rank of regular official [*gyüma*].
>
> Lungshar, you were asked by the military officers not to tell the Assembly about their visit but you did so anyway and created much misunderstanding and problems. So your punishment is to pay a fine of 27 gold coins.
>
> The rest of the military officers are fined from 18 to 30 gold coins based on your actions in the affair, and the other Assembly and Trungtsi members are fined 15 gold coins for calling a halt to the Assembly Meeting. Futhermore, from now on, on top of whatever representatives are normally appointed to the Assembly, one military officer will be added.[30]

By and large the military were the losers in the National Assembly incident. They obtained representation in the assembly and the elimination of Kusantse, the shape who opposed their aims, but the Dalai Lama demoted two of their most capable officers, thus warning Tsarong that the military must not become too arrogant and too insensitive to traditional values. Despite his deep affection for Tsarong, the Dalai Lama had let the military know that he would not allow them to make decisions for him. While the creation of a strong military still remained a priority for the Dalai Lama, over the next four years he

30. Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.

would increasingly come to view the military not as his own power base, but as another threat to his position.

In that same year another incident occurred which brought the military partway back into the Dalai Lama's good graces. The relations between the Dalai Lama and Loseling college of Drepung monastery had been strained for years. The Tengyeling (Demo) Conspiracy and, more important, the support Loseling gave the Chinese during the fighting in 1911–1912 when the Dalai Lama's volunteer army was trying to drive the Chinese out of Lhasa had infuriated the Dalai Lama. Led by Loseling college's three managers (the *tshaja, phuja,* and *gongja*), Drepung monastery had adhered to a pro-Chinese and anti–Dalai Lama policy.[31] When the Dalai Lama's officials ordered them to send monks to help fight the Chinese, they refused, saying that they were monks, not soldiers. They agreed to fight only if the Chinese tried to force their way into Drepung itself. Many of the Loseling officials such as the *tshaja* were from Chinese-administered parts of Kham and tended to have pro-Chinese, anti-government leanings. This was well known to the Manchu amban; when he had to flee for his life, he went to Drepung, where he was sheltered in a mountaintop retreat until the fighting was over.[32]

Loseling's behavior warranted punishment, but during the period from 1913 to 1919, the Dalai Lama was too preoccupied with the Simla Talks and the warfare in Kham to confront Loseling. But by late 1920 no such restraints existed, so when a dispute arose in Loseling college, the Dalai Lama took the opportunity to attack its leaders.

The incident began in late 1920 when the Loseling managers, led by the *tshaja,* told a former monastic official named Adala that his khamtsen wanted an estate returned.[33] Adala had been holding this estate on "permanent lease" (*khantsin*), paying Loseling a lease fee every year and managing the estate as if it were his own. Believing he had permanent rights to this estate so long as he paid the annual fee, he refused to

31. Surkhang, interview. These three are the managers of Tsha khamtsen, Gonggo khamtsen, and Phugang khamtsen, Loseling's three largest khamtsen.

32. Ibid.

33. It is not clear whether they just wanted to give the estate to someone else, as some suggest, or whether they intended to take direct administrative control over all such estates.

return it. When the Loseling managers decided to take it by force, Adala complained to an acquaintance, the powerful Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo, who immediately saw this as an opportunity to strike back at the Loseling managers. He told Adala to petition the government.[34]

With this petition in hand, the Drönyerchemmo summoned the three Loseling managers to his house sometime in mid to late May 1921.[35] When they arrived, they were told to go to Shöl (see Map 3). At Shöl they found the Drönyerchemmo waiting, not to greet them, but to arrest them. Military troops were placed on special guard duty by the jail, and the next day the final order was read to them. Although normally such orders specify the nature of the crime or misdeed, in this case it simply said that "your faults are known to you so there is no need to list them." The *tshaja* and *phuja* were exiled; their private property was confiscated; and they were whipped and disgraced by being driven out of Lhasa on white oxen.[36] The third manager, the *gongja*, was released without punishment, most likely because he had not been in power in 1910–1913.

The monks in Drepung found out about these acts only when the *gongja* returned. They immediately sent food and clothes to the Lhasa prison, but the two managers had already been exiled. All of Loseling's twenty-four khamtsen then had a meeting to discuss what to do. Led by two monks named Ancanali and Ngogar, they refused to listen to their abbots but decided instead to go en masse to the Norbulinga Palace to demand the release of the two managers.

The monks of nearby Nechung monastery (see Map 2) tried to stop the Loseling monks when they saw them pouring out of Drepung, but the several thousand Loseling monks went on to Norbulinga, forcing their monastery officials to accompany them. The guards at the palace gate also could not stop them but let them pass into the grounds and then to the Yellow Wall that surrounds the living area of the Dalai Lama. There the senior monastic officials prostrated and shouted that

34. Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.

35. While on their way there on horseback, they were met by a servant of Deyang Tshenship (the assistant tutor to the Dalai Lama), who told them that they should not go to Lhasa that day as it was not good. The three managers discussed this but decided that since they were so close to Norbulinga, they should go on.

36. Surkhang, interview; Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.

they wanted to see the Dalai Lama, who was in retreat at that time. They yelled that their managers had done no wrong and so should be released and their property returned. The monks also taunted the troops on guard by the Yellow Wall, daring them to shoot. When they did not, the mob of monks forcibly took the troop's weapons and broke them. While the senior monks shouted and prostrated, the younger monks urinated and defecated all over the Dalai Lama's gardens, pulled up and trampled the Dalai Lama's flowers, broke the statues, and sang as loudly as possible in order to disturb him.[37]

The Lönchen Sholkang came out to try to calm them. He made the traditional pleading gesture with his thumbs and said, "Please don't do this. Whatever you have to say, tell me." But the monks treated him rudely, saying, "Old man, you don't know anything. We want to see the Dalai Lama."[38]

This incident reinforced for the Dalai Lama the importance of having a powerful army. Tsarong, who was hosting a party in his house at the time, was immediately summoned to Norbulinga Palace. However, it was decided that nothing should be done, for if the military in Lhasa were called out and opened fire on the monks, the action would be likely to provoke the other monasteries and colleges to support Loseling and possibly precipitate an all-out civil war. The government's military position in Lhasa at this time was comprised of roughly 700 soldiers, not an adequate force to control a joint reaction by the Three Seats.[39] The Dalai Lama therefore pretended he knew nothing of what had happened. The monks finally left Norbulinga in the afternoon. In the meantime the Dalai Lama and Tsarong had issued orders to recall several thousand troops and militia to Lhasa in preparation for moving

37. Urgyenla, interview; Surkhang, interview; Bell 1946: 90–115. The Tibetan term *trapa lu* (*grwa pa lugs*) expresses this rushing out by the monks to protest and intimidate the government. The verb *lu* normally conveys a substance bursting out of confinement, as water from a hole in a dam.

38. Urgyenla, interview; Surkhang, interview; Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.

39. IOR, L/PS/10/883, telegram from Bell in Lhasa to the Government of India, Delhi, dated 3 August 1921. Tsarong Rimshi (personal communication) contends that there were more than 700 soldiers in Lhasa at this time. He says the Bodyguard Regiment had 500, and that there were two or three other regiments in Lhasa. This may well be correct, but Bell was referring to troops on hand; often a sizable portion of a regiment was on leave. In any case, even 1,200 soldiers was hardly an overwhelming force for a major confrontation.

on the monastery. They also armed the 700 in Lhasa with live ammunition.[40]

That night Tsarong moved several army units to positions between Norbulinga and Drepung.[41] The Dalai Lama, through Tsarong, ordered Loseling to turn over the protest ringleaders, but the monks refused. Soldiers were moved in front of Drepung, where they set up camps. Loseling college appealed to the monks of Sera and Ganden, as well as to the monks of Drepung's other major college, Gomang, to support them, and then posted pickets above their monastery.[42] Various lamas such as Kundeling and Ditru tried to mediate the confrontation, but the monks would not agree to turn over their ringleaders. Sera, however, quickly refused to join Loseling; and later Ganden also refused, as did Drepung's own Gomang college. Loseling was on its own. But since it contained 4,000 to 5,000 monks, it was a formidable opponent. The monks threatened to attack Norbulinga and Lhasa, and said they would seize the Drönyerchemmo, whom they saw as their main enemy in this fight.[43]

By the second week in August the Tibetan government had massed about 3,000 troops in Lhasa and now felt confident that they could handle the monks. Loseling college was to be taught a lesson, if possible without bloodshed. The Dalai Lama had just demoted two of the most capable officers, Shankawa and Tshögaw. He now needed them, so he ordered the Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo to ask them to become army commanders once again. Shankawa said no, but Tshögaw, hotheaded as usual, enthusiastically agreed, saying that he would "kill all those baldheaded ones [*go riri*]." He also wryly noted that he was like silverware that is polished by the government when needed for some ceremony, then put away afterward. So Tshögaw was given a regiment, and he, Doring, Trentong, and Tsarong led the action against Drepung.[44]

The government troops were deployed in a semicircle in front of the

40. Ibid.
41. Tsarong (Rimshi), personal correspondence.
42. IOR, L/PS/10/883, telegram from Bell in Lhasa to the Government of India, dated 3 September 1921, cited in a telegram from the Government of India to His Majesty's Government, dated 11 September 1921.
43. Bell 1946: 327.
44. Surkhang, interview; Shan kha ba (Shankawa), ms.

monastery. They were under strict orders from the Dalai Lama not to fire at the monastery, however, since this might generate widespread sympathy for the monks. In the meantime, demands were renewed to the monks to turn over the leaders of the demonstration.[45]

Loseling found itself in an untenable situation. It was without support from either the Sera or the Ganden monastery, or even from Gomang college in their own monastery; it had been unable to get the Khamba community in Lhasa to lend military support; and it was blocked by a large army force led by Tsarong and Tshögaw, both of whom were unlikely to have qualms about taking on the monks militarily. Loseling therefore surrendered eleven ringleaders by mid-September.[46] Others who had run away, such as Ancanali, were captured in caves on the mountains behind Drepung during an all-out search in which the government ordered all district officials to seize and hold any Loseling monk who passed their way.[47] The government even interrupted a teaching by Taktra Rimpoche in his hermitage north of Lhasa to see if Ancanali might be there.[48]

All told, about sixty monks were arrested, paraded around the city, lightly flogged, and placed in shackles with cangues on their necks (see Figure 11). They were then put under the custody of various aristocratic families. The Dalai Lama dismissed all the Drepung abbots and passed a rule giving himself the right, for the first time, to appoint the managers of Drepung's khamtsen. He also imposed a new rule whereby these managers were chosen only from among the monks from Central Tibet. This was done to decrease the power of the Eastern Tibetan (Khamba) monks, whom the Dalai Lama saw as more pro-Chinese and less amenable to control by the central government.[49]

For the first time in modern Tibetan history, the government's army had confronted the monks directly and forced them to concede. Although not a single shot was fired, the monks' fears about the newly

45. Ibid.

46. IOR, L/PS/10/883, telegram from Bell in Lhasa to the Government of India, Delhi, dated 16 September 1921, cited in a telegram from the Government of India to His Majesty's Government, dated 23 September 1921.

47. Urgyenla, interview.

48. Khri byang 1975: 94–95.

49. Urgyenla, interview.



11.

Convict in Lhasa market in leg shackles and neck cangue (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

developed Tibetan military were shown to be valid. The Loseling incident of 1921 represents a major turning point in the relationship between the government and the Three Seats. The Dalai Lama had been able to teach the monasteries a political lesson without shedding blood. The thousands of volatile monks around Lhasa were served notice that they could no longer intimidate the Dalai Lama with impunity. The Dalai Lama later told Bell that "it was necessary for me to make a show of force or else the large monasteries would continually give me trouble"; but he went on to say that he intended to show them leniency.[50] And in a sense he did. The ringleaders were severely punished, but the monastery and monks were not. No estates were confiscated, as had been done at Tengyeling.[51]

50. IOR, L/PS/10/883, telegram from Bell in Lhasa to the Government of India, Delhi, dated 16 September 1921, cited in a telegram from the Government of India to His Majesty's Government, dated 23 September 1921.

51. The entire Tengyeling monastery had been razed to the ground in 1913.

A year later, the head of Ganden monastery, the Ganden Thriba, arranged for the Dalai Lama to visit Loseling for the inauguration of a new building. The monks showed the Dalai Lama deference and told him repeatedly that the building had been erected by the exiled *tshaja* in an effort to secure his release. The Dalai Lama replied that he had not realized how much good the *tshaja* had done and would release him if he promised never again to become involved in politics. The *tshaja's* release ended the first military-monk confrontation, but although the monks came to terms with the Dalai Lama, they remained bitter enemies of the military clique and the Westernization its ascendency heralded.

These feelings were exacerbated by another critical incident involving the second greatest Gelugpa incarnate lama, the 9th Panchen Lama, Chökyi Nyima (see Figure 12).

THE FLIGHT OF THE PANCHEN LAMA

The need to build a strong military and maintain a large army, equipped with modern British rifles, on the Kham border had dramatically increased the expenses of the Tibetan government and resulted in the imposition of a special tax on the great monasteries, including Tashilhunpo, the seat of the Panchen Lama. Outside of the central government, the Panchen Lama was the largest estate-holder in Tibet, possessing not only numerous manorial estates but also ten whole districts.

Considerable ill feeling between the officials of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama had arisen from the Panchen's behavior following the Dalai Lama's flights to exile in 1904 and 1910. When financial support was needed for the large contingent of troops on active duty in Kham, some remembered that during a previous war with Nepal in 1791, when the Gurkha troops attacked Tashilhunpo, the then Panchen Lama had paid one-quarter of all the military costs. The Dalai Lama used this as a precedent and, after returning to Tibet in 1912, informed the Panchen Lama that he had to pay one-fourth of the total military costs of the 1912–1913 Chinese war, as well as one-fourth of the costs of the Tibet-British wars of 1888 and 1904. This amounted to 27,000



12.

9th Panchen Lama

ke of grain. The Panchen Lama vigorously disagreed with this interpretation and paid only a portion of the sum.[52]

Dalai-Panchen relations further deteriorated in 1917 when the Dalai Lama instituted a new rule called the Fire-Snake Year Order: the serfs of Tashilhunpo in Gyantse District were to pay one-seventh of the horse and carrying-animal corvée tax on levies of over 100 horses and 300 carrying animals. Since Tashilhunpo had written statements from past Dalai Lamas exempting its serfs from providing such corvée services for anyone but Tashilhunpo, the Panchen Lama viewed this as an illegal abrogation of his prerogatives. In 1923 the Water-Pig Year Order extended the previous order to all Tashilhunpo serfs in Tsang.[53] And in 1922, the new Revenue Investigation Office levied an additional annual tax on Tashilhunpo of about 30,000 *ke* of grain and 10,000 silver coins.[54]

The Panchen Lama and his officials attacked the validity of the new taxes, arguing that their precedent was invalid. They argued that they had paid one-fourth of the Tibetan government's military expenses in 1791 only because their own city and monastery were under attack. They also argued that they could not afford to make such payments and still fulfill their religious obligations to their monks, and they presented documents that granted them tax exemptions. Meanwhile, as they were protesting the decision, each year the unpaid taxes piled up. Lungshar played a major role in this controversy, insisting that the Panchen Lama could pay the new tax. His examination of the records of the Panchen Lama's government documented that they could easily pay the new levy and the corvée taxes. He convinced the Dalai Lama that the real motive behind the Panchen Lama's refusal was his ambivalence about the supreme authority of the Dalai Lama. Thus, increasing revenue to support the army produced a major dispute between the Panchen Lama and the central government.

Additional details of this dispute come from the Panchen Lama's approach to the British in India through the Gyantse trade agent, D. MacDonald, asking for help. MacDonald wrote:

52. Don khang 1984: 2.
53. Ibid.: 35.
54. Ibid.: 57.

I have the honour to report that His Serenity the Tashi [Panchen] Lama sent a messenger to me yesterday with a private letter (which he requested me to return to him) stating as follows:

That the Lhasa Government has demanded that the Tashi Lhumpo Government should contribute one fourth of the total expenditure for the upkeep of the Tibetan Army, which consists of the following:

(a) Rs. 650,000/– approximately,

(b) 10,000 maunds of grain valued at Rs. 80.000/–,

(c) 2,000 boxes of Chinese brick-tea, valued at Rs. 85,000/–.

(d) In addition to the above, they have asked for other liberal concessions (not mentioned in the above letter).

In default of complying with the above demands, I have been informed that the officials of the Tashi Lhumpo Government who are undergoing imprisonment at the Potala Palace will not be released and others will also be imprisoned.

. . . His Serenity the Tashi Lama states that he is unable to meet the demands made upon him and proposes to submit a representation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the subject. If his request is granted, things will then of course be all right; but if not, His Serenity wishes to know whether the Government of India will mediate between himself and His Holiness the Dalai Lama as he states that his only hope is the assistance of the Government of India.[55]

After several unsuccessful protests by his officials and one aborted attempt to escape when he went to the hot springs in Lhatse District,[56] the Panchen Lama on 26 December 1923 secretly fled to Mongolia, leaving the following instructions for his followers in Tashilhunpo:

Be it known to all the Abbots and Assistants of the four colleges and also to the Acting Prime Minister and the Monk and Lay officials of the Tashi Lhunpo Government:—

With regard to the troubles of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government and their subjects, I have submitted representations to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on several occasions, but my requests have not been granted. At the same time His Holiness has always shown me kindness. The investigating officers listened to the advice of evil-minded persons and made it

55. IOR, L/PS/12/4174, letter from the British trade agent in Gyantse to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 18 November 1922. The British refused to intervene.

56. Phun rab, 1984: 130.

very difficult for His Holiness to grant my requests. In consequence, orders were issued to all Jongpoens of the Tsang Province that they must supply free transport, etc., to the officials of the Lhasa Government, against the prevailing custom. Moreover, I have been asked to make contributions for the upkeep of the Tibetan Army, but the nobles and subjects were unable to take the responsibility of meeting these demands. For these reasons, the subjects of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government were disappointed and became dissatisfied. You are all aware of these facts and these things have made it quite impossible for us to live in peace. I should have made further representation, but it would have created a difficult position for His Holiness. I am therefore leaving Tashi-Lhunpo for a short period to make it easier for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I am going to see whether I can secure any one to mediate between us, with the assistance of the dispensers of gifts in Kham and Mongolia whither I have despatched messengers. It is quite impossible for me to make the annual contributions to meet the Military expenses and I am compelled to proceed to an unknown destination to try to raise funds from the Buddhists who may be inclined to help me voluntarily. I may state here once and for all that I have no desire to do anything against the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or that will be injurious to our prestige. The letter which I have addressed to His Holiness should be at once forwarded, so as to make matters clear to him. After due consideration I have appointed the Acting Prime Minister [of Tashilhunpo] and the Abbots of the four Colleges [of Tashilhunpo] to carry on the administration during my absence. First of all, you should see that the customary ceremonies are performed in the Tashi-Lhunpo and other monasteries as usual. You should also see that the Lamas of the different monasteries receive their rations; and that the monks study all the religious books and preach the religion, and that they do not neglect the subject of disputation; and above all, you should see that all the monastic rules are duly observed. Finally, you should discharge your duties faithfully and treat the poor subjects and monks with all consideration and help them in every way possible. You should keep careful accounts of all receipts and expenditure from land revenue, etc., and apply the balance for the observance of religious ceremonies. You should carry on your duties appertaining to the spiritual and temporal powers after due consultation; but if you cannot decide any big question, you should refer the matter to me for orders. You should discharge the duties of your responsible position without fail and leave nothing undone. I hearby

> command all the monks and laymen, who are subjects of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government, to obey the orders of the Acting Prime Minister and Council and discharge their duties faithfully. Let all noblemen and peasants bear these instructions in mind and act accordingly. I will issue necessary orders in the future according to circumstances. Let all the animate beings bear this in mind. I have issued these orders on the auspicious date—the 18th day of the 11th month of the Water-Pig Year [26 December 1923].[57]

The Tibetan government sent troops under the command of Lungshar and Tshögaw to stop him, but they were too late and the Panchen Lama escaped with a large entourage.

The Dalai Lama responded by appointing his own administrator, the Dzasa Lama, to take over the administration of Tashilhunpo:

> This is addressed to all men who enjoy the dual blessings of true religion and good government and especially to the great incarnate Lama Si-thei-thu Lhopa and to all the Officials of the Tashi-Lhunpo Monastery and the heads of the four Colleges, the Jongpens of Lhatse, Ngam-ring, Phuntsoling and Kampajong, and to all the high and low monks and laymen:—
>
> Recently, I received the following report from the two Jongpens [*dzongpön*] who are acting as my representatives at Shigatse:— "Before the Tashi Lama left Shigatse for some unknown destination, he left written instructions as to how the administration was to be carried on during his absence; these are briefly as follows:
>
> "With regard to the complaints of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government great kindness has been shown to me by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, but the investigating officers have not done justice. They have ordered the subjects of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government to supply free transport, etc. Moreover, I am unable to undertake the responsibility of obtaining the supplies and money required to meet the military expenditure. I am therefore leaving Tashi-Lhunpo for a short period for an unknown destination to seek assistance from the dispenser of gifts in Kham and Mongolia and raise funds from all Buddhists."
>
> As regards the free supplies and transport asked for from the subjects

57. IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 1769/24), British trade agent in Gyantse to the political officer in Sikkim, roughly March 1924.

of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government, they have agreed to supply the same and the demands are in accordance with the existing agreements. I have therefore issued orders that these should be complied with and there is no cause for complaint. The investigating officers have not shown any favour to any party by receiving gifts; and I have letters to prove that this action will not do any harm to the Tashi Lama or myself especially as we are both on most friendly terms. In connection with the payment of one fourth of the total military expenditure in Tibet, it may be mentioned that it is in accordance with former custom, but as the Prime Minister did not make the payment for a number of years, the amount accumulated and could not be paid at once. The result was that it caused trouble in their eyes when they rubbed them with their own hands. I have not once used any force to exact the payment. On the other hand, out of compassion, I agreed that the payment should be spread over several years and reduced the amount as much as I could. This fact is known to all the wise men. This time, the Tashi Lama has gone secretly on the pretext that the two things mentioned above caused him trouble and listened to the advice of evil persons. I have sent the Chief Accountant, Lungshar, to persuade him to return to Shigatse with the following message:— "Having heard of your secret departure I have been deeply grieved at the news because our relations had been friendly and I was your teacher. Remembering the fact that you and I were born as a father and son (i.e., teacher and disciple), it is not right for me to treat you just as I pleased; but there is a custom prevailing among the high class people that the elder should advise the younger. You did not consult me in the matter and I do not know the real reasons for your departure and what the end will be. I myself had to visit China, Mongolia and India, owing to the British and Chinese troops having come to the Tibetan Capital, in order to save the spiritual and temporal powers. I suffered great hardships to secure happiness and to safeguard our religion. By adopting wise means, it is known to all that the Buddhist religion is spreading and that the temporal powers of Tibet are in our hand and that we are enjoying peace and prosperity. But you must have been misled by your followers who had previously caused mischief. As sins cannot be washed away by water and mental sorrow cannot be removed by the hands, why are you disappointed? Moreover, since I have assumed both the spiritual and temporal powers, I have treated all the subjects and officials of the Tashi-Lhunpo Government with the greatest consideration, rewarding those who observed the laws of religion and the customs of the country in

greater matters and it is lawful to punish a few evil-doers. With regard to trifling matters, I have taken no steps and left everything in peace. These cannot be described here in detail. I request you to think over the conversation we had at our previous meeting; and if you read the correspondence that has passed between us, you will understand everything. You have written to me frequently saying that there is no other protector to whom you can go for assistance and protection. In view of the correspondence and the conversation we had at our meeting, it is not understood why you departed secretly unless you have found yourself at fault. By going to Mongolia, great dangers will beset you. At the time I visited China and Mongolia, it was peaceful everywhere, but the political situation is quite different now and this fact is well-known to you. It is not understood why you have left your monastery in which you should now be sitting in meditation. You seem to have forgotten the sacred history of your predecessors and wandered away to a desert where there are no people—like a butterfly that is attracted by the lamp-light,—and thus bringing trouble to yourself. Such conduct does not do credit to your predecessors and if you had only taken the trouble to consult your teacher 'Lhopa', he would have given you sound advice. But you did not consult him and ran away with your sinful companions who resemble elephants and followed the wrong path. Although you are a holy person, if the fruits of your deed ripen, there is no doubt that you will suffer great hardships. As I feel the separation from you, I despatched Tsipon Lungshar to persuade you and your followers to return to your monastery for the sake of the Buddhist religion and the good government of the country and chiefly for your happiness and prosperity, at a time when religion has reached a stage like a lamp in which all the oil has become nearly consumed. It is mentioned in many religious books that you and I and all the holy persons should strive to work for the benefit of all living beings. It is difficult to believe that a person who thinks of himself only and who is not freed from the three sins, (i.e., anger, pride, and ignorance) should be regarded as a Lama or Buddha. As selfishness is a great evil in this world, the wisest course to adopt is to repent and turn back from the wrong path. What I have said above is perfectly true. You have written to me on many occasions asking me to appoint a Dzasa Lama (Prime Minister) at Tashi-Lhunpo and I could have done so; but as you enjoyed both the spiritual and temporal powers, I agreed to your proposal to carry on the administration with the assistance of four Ministers appointed by you. But as you and your ministers have left Shigatse

and gone to a foreign country, the Tibetan Government will appoint a Dzasa Lama and send him to Tashi-Lhunpo without delay to manage the internal and external affairs for the benefit of all the subjects. This notice is issued to all the monks and subjects in order that they may understand everything that has taken place and act accordingly without making any mistake to attain happiness in this life as well as in the next." Dated the 20th day of the 12th month of the Water-Pig year [26 January 1924].

Seal of Dalai Lama[58]

In July 1924 the Panchen Lama sent an answer from China, reiterating what he had said in the letter cited above.

Although it is impossible . . . for your Holiness to entertain any ill intentions toward me, being teacher and pupil, yet as I had written to Your Holiness many times before, some of the ignorant and mischievous officials of Your Holiness who have an axe to grind have been creating estrangement and inconvenience between us. . Owing to many regulations contrary to the laws and usage set forth by the previous Dalai Lamas, Tashi Lhunpo and the lesser monasteries which are under my jurisdiction have greatly suffered and the few poor peasants working on the lands belonging to these monasteries have become destitute owing to the new taxes and unprecedented call for free labor. Again to pay the enormous tax known as the quarter of the army expenditure with no land as a means from which the money could be obtained and which none of the other subjects had to pay, caused us great anxiety. Moreover my poor and unsophisticated servants had to endure great hardship and cruelty so that there was no peace of mind either regards externally or internally and [they] suffered great indignity. Although I tried many times to obtain a personal interview so as to lay before Your Holiness the real state of affairs as it is in my mind and obtain Your Holiness's true advice as to what is the best thing to be done to help towards paying this new army expenditure tax. This again the above mentioned ill minded officials of Your Holiness with the purpose of frustrating amicable settlement concocted many difficulties in the way and Your Holiness informed me that even to have just a personal interview would place both the teacher and the pupil in an awkward position. Therefore not knowing what to do, leaving a note to your Holiness asking for permission to be transmitted

58. IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 1431/24), enclosure to letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 20 February 1924.

by the Shigatse-Chizong, I set forth and I did not ask for permission beforehand as it might again make things awkward and this is the real reason and please do not be offended with me. . Dispatched from Langchowfu on 13th of 5th month of the Wood-Mouse Year [July 1924].[59]

In reply the Dalai Lama wrote:

I am writing this privately, without standing on any ceremony.

Recently, on the 6th intercalary day of the 4th month of the Fire-Tiger Year (which corresponds to the 17/18 May 1926) I received your kind letter along with its accompaniment . . through Jampa Thog me.

You say, and I think so too, that some evil-minded subordinate, who did not wish that the teacher and pupil should remain on good terms, must have reported against and caused trouble for Labrang, that it was not convenient for you to come and lay your grievances before me in person, to clear my mind and take my advice. . . . In order to make permanent the secular and religious rule of Tibet, it was found expedient to assess and collect extra taxes. This measure has affected all the landlords, the Government and the monasteries—a fact which is well known to you—and it was not especially adopted in order to put the Labrang into trouble. It is no new thing for a Government to call for reports from its subordinates with regard to new taxation. These reports the subordinates base on their experience. If anyone has said anything untoward between the teacher . and the pupil . . . I would not have taken notice of it. Whatever cause for complaint the Labrang might have, we could have gone into it at our leisure. But, instead you have left suddenly without any reason. It is not possible that you . . . could have become disloyal to me. In all probability you have been swayed by the reports of one or two servants, who do not understand things. I view your long stay on that side with pessimism, as I do not know what will happen to you. Here I am offering prayers to the precious trinity and am performing other holy ceremonies on a big scale for your well-being. Therefore, taking into consideration the secular and religious interests of Tibet, and more particularly of the monks of the Tashi Lhunpo monastery, it would be a good thing if you would come back immediately. If you would kindly do this, I would render all necessary help. I am issuing strict orders to Dzasa Lama Lobzang Tenzing and his assistants to see that the

59. IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 6939/32), enclosure to letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 19 October 1932.

> Tashi Lhunpo monastery and its branch monasteries are not put to any inconvenience... Dispatched on the 2nd day of the 5th month of the Iron-Tiger Year (which corresponds to the 12th June 1926).[60]

The 9th Panchen Lama did not respond to this letter, but remained in China. (His subsequent attempts to return to Tibet are discussed in Chapter Eight.) Although couched in the idiom of personal misunderstandings, these letters clearly show that the fundamental issue was the extent of the authority of the central government. However, to large segments of the more orthodox Gelugpa population, the forced flight of the Panchen Lama was seen as but another of the disagreeable consequences of secular changes in Tibet and the rise to prominence of the Western-oriented military faction. This is illustrated by two street songs in Lhasa applauding the Panchen Lama's successful flight into exile.

> The Panchen, saying he is a vulture,
> has gone in great leaps and bounds.
> Tshögaw, saying he is a hunting hound,
> has returned sniffing the ground.
>
> Our Lama is a God,
> [our] Lama's horse is a bird.
> Having put a golden saddle on the bird,
> he has flown off into the sky.[61]

During the three years following the Loseling *tshaja* incident, new regiments were raised, and Bell convinced the British government to sell the Tibetans 10 mountain guns, 20 Lewis guns, and 10,000 rifles with ammunition.[62] Moreover, 4 officers and over 300 noncommis-

60. IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 6940), cited in letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 1 October 1932.

61. In Tibetan: *pan chen rgod po yin zer / lam 'phongs gcad nas thad song / mtsho sgog sha khyi yin zer / dri ma snum nas sleb byung. nga tsho'i bla ma lha red / bla ma'i chibs pa bya red / bya la gser sga sgron nas / nam mkha' dbyings brgyud phebs song.*

62. After warning the Chinese that unless they resumed negotiations with Tibet within one month Britain would feel free to "give the Tibetans any reasonable assistance they might require in the development of their country," on 11 October 1921 the Government of India informed the Dalai Lama that "His Majesty's Government will permit the Tibetan Government to import on payment munitions in installments at adequate intervals," provided they were used only for defense. Between 1921 and 1931, apparently three such installments were made, with a fourth in late 1931 (F0371/20222, p. 225).

sioned officers received military training in Gyantse between 1922 and 1925;[63] 4 officers and 20 noncommissioned officers received training in the use of mountain guns in Quetta in India; and others were trained as armorers, and in gunnery, infantry, and cavalry work.

The British provided technical assistance in building a telegraph line between Lhasa and Gyantse, and some Tibetan youths were trained as telegraphers. Machinery for a 40,000-rupee hydroelectric plant was purchased from England, and work on the plant began. A survey for mineral wealth was conducted in Tibet by an Englishman, and an English school under the direction of a Mr. F. Ludlow was started in Gyantse in 1924 with several dozen aristocrats' sons in attendance (see Figures 13 and 14). And Ladenla, a Sikkimese police officer from Darjeeling, was hired to establish a modern police force in Lhasa.

Other plans were also considered. Tsarong wanted Tibet to join the International Postal Union, to produce a Tibetan typewriter in India, and to develop motor car and motorboat transportation in Tibet.[64] Others were also eager to modernize; for example, Commander Surkhang organized polo matches and constructed a tennis court in Lhasa. Several other army commanders, including Tshögaw, cut their hair short in the British style. These were heady times for the pro-modern, pro-Western faction. It looked as though Tibet was going to be able to develop the political, economic, and military infrastructure of a reasonably modern state.

Throughout these years, the Drönyerchemmo Ara gaapo had harassed the military clique and attempted unsuccessfully to erode the Dalai Lama's confidence in Tsarong. In 1924 an incident occurred that again reversed the direction of Tibet's political development, resulting in the demotion of almost all the army commanders, including Tsarong, and ending the incipient program of modernization in Tibet.

The creation of a modern police force for Lhasa in 1922–1923 generated resentment among the army soldiers, who held that the police did less work but received almost twice the salary and got better uniforms. In early May 1924, a fight between some soldiers and policemen

63. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/214a, Lhasa Diary of Major F. M. Bailey for 22, 30, and 31 July 1924.
64. Ibid.



13.

English school in Gyantse, group portrait (ca. 1924–1926) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

ended with the fatal stabbing of a policeman. Ladenla, the head of the police,[65] was notified of the fight while he was attending an all-day party with Tsarong and a number of other military commanders. The report he received warned that a bigger conflict might erupt, since the soldiers were returning to the arsenal at Trapchi to get ammunition.[66]

Ladenla, like everyone else at the party, was slightly intoxicated when the news arrived. He angrily informed Tsarong of the incident, publicly suggesting that as commander-in-chief of the army, Tsarong had every

65. Ladenla held an ambivalent position in Tibet, for though officially a Tibetan government employee, he had been lent to Tibet by the Government of India in August 1923 to develop the police force. Though a Sikkimese (i.e., an ethnic Tibetan), he was very British in outlook and often wore bow ties, riding breeches, and a British hat.

66. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letters from Norbhu Dondup to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 28 and 30 August 1927; Taring 1970: 72.



14.

English school in Gyantse, classroom photo (ca. 1924–1926) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

right to punish the guilty soldiers by hanging them or even by tying them to the front of a cannon and blowing them up. He also warned that continued conflicts could seriously damage the military's future.[67] Tsarong too was enraged at his troops; this was just the kind of bad publicity that his enemies would use against him. He decided, therefore, to make an example of the guilty soldiers that would serve as a potent deterrent.

All the military officers at once went to the scene of the disturbance, where Tsarong punished the guilty soldiers on the spot: the soldier who killed the policeman had one of his legs amputated above the knee, and the soldier who helped him had his right ear cut off.[68] The former died

67. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Dondup to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 30 August 1927.

68. Tshögaw reported that these punishments were Ladenla's suggestion (ibid.). Sambo (Rimshi) (interview) recalls that when he was a boy he heard that Tsarong had said (in verse), "*bcu dpon blo bzang me sgyogs rtse la bskon / de bying dmags me dgu thog brgyab nas bzos* (The Jupon (Sergeant) Lobsang should be hanged on the cannon's opening [and blown away]. The rest of the soldiers should be killed in a volley [of shots]."

and his head and limb were publicly displayed on the left and right of the entrance to the Thromsikang Lhasa marketplace beside the Barkor and Jokhang Temple.

These events gave the Drönyerchemmo a new opportunity to attack Tsarong and the military. Pointing to the military's failure to contact the government regarding either the crime or the punishment, he told the Dalai Lama: "Do they see themselves as above the government or independent of it? You banned amputations as a form of punishment, but they still do whatever they want. There should have been arrests and then investigations by the appropriate government agencies. Where will all this end?"[69] Angered by Tsarong's defiance of his orders, the Dalai Lama instructed the Drönyerchemmo to investigate the incident thoroughly. The Drönyerchemmo therefore ordered Tsarong to report to him and explain his actions.

Fearing that the Drönyerchemmo would present any explanation in the worst possible light, and feeling also that it was unsuitable to be questioned on a military matter by a lower-ranking monk official, Tsarong refused to cooperate with the Drönyerchemmo. His recalcitrance only increased the persuasiveness of the Drönyerchemmo's arguments that the military clique was setting itself up as a law unto itself.

The military faction's next moves were catastrophic. Several versions of them are available. One account, derived from Ladenla's reports to the political officer in Sikkim, says that the military commanders, fearing Tsarong would be demoted, acted on the suggestion of Commander Surkhang that they join with the police officers in sending a petition to the Dalai Lama to excuse Tsarong.[70]

The leading officers met secretly to sign the petition jointly. Being somewhat distrustful of each other, however, and knowing that the Dalai Lama might interpret the petition as a veiled threat from the army, they took an oath that none of them would say later that the petition was the work of just one or two men. This secret meeting took place in Ladenla's house, because he, as an Indian subject, was immune from retribution. Ladenla later claimed he acted only as a neu-

69. Anon 1, interview.
70. Surkhang and Tshögaw (and others), however, told Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa that it was Ladenla who was the prime mover.

tral witness to all these events, but this is very unlikely.[71] The petition stated:

> On the (blank) of the (blank) month of the Wood-Mouse Year—there was a dispute between the police and soldiers of the "Ta" Regiment. The Commander-in-Chief, in the presence of the majority of the military and police officers—in order to avoid further trouble—punished one soldier of the "Ta" regiment by having his leg amputated, and another by cutting off his ear.
>
> The Commander-in-Chief found that the officers of the "Ta" Regiment failed to take sufficient interest in their duties—and thus caused the firing. Therefore he called on some of them in writing to explain—but he could not complete taking their explanations that night as there was no time. While he was enquiring into the matter, on the 2nd day of the 3rd intercalary month [5 May 1924] His Holiness the Dalai Lama sent Dronyer Chemmo to Tsarong Shape, Commander-in-Chief, calling upon him to submit his explanation [for the punishments]. The undersigned officers having discussed the submission of this explanation have decided to submit the enclosed combined memorial to His Holiness the Dalai Lama begging him to pardon him [Tsarong] and to excuse him from submitting the explanation called for. We therefore sign our names consecutively:
>
> Trompa Dzasa,
> Assistant Commander-in-Chief
>
> Khensam (Mondo),
> Police Officer
>
> Surse Wangte (Depon Surkhang),
> Military Officer
>
> Khyungram (Depon),
> Military Officer
>
> Salung Tsetop (Depon)
> Military Officer
>
> Rupon Tsogo,
> Military Officer
>
> Samse (Detsab)
>
> Dose (Ragashar),
> Police Officer
>
> Lhase (Lhadingse),
> Police Officer
>
> Kyipub (youngest Kyipub)
>
> Chotran Khen tsural,
> Police Officer[72]

71. IOR, L/PS/10/1088. Landenla's account is cited in a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 28 May 1927. Ladenla claimed to Bailey that he had not signed the petition.

72. IOR, L/PS/10/1088, translation of the petition of Tibetan military commanders (a copy of which had been sent by Ladenla to the political officer) attached to a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 28 May 1927.

They took this petition to Tsarong the next day and, after some discussion, decided to take it to the Lönchen Sholkang and ask his opinion before sending it to the Dalai Lama.

Sholkang had already met with the Drönyerchemmo and had little sympathy with Tsarong's arguments. There are two versions of his response. According to Ladenla, he advised against submitting the petition and asked Tsarong to submit an explanation to the Drönyerchemmo. In this account, the officers and Tsarong agreed with this response.[73]

Another, fuller version of these events comes from Tshögaw, one of the army commanders, as told to Norbhu Döndup (see Figure 15), the ethnic Tibetan Indian government official then in Lhasa:

> So all of them left the Host house and on their arrival at Mr. Laden La's house (Yamen) Tsarong shouted and ceased all firing and on enquiry he got hold of the two guilty soldiers who stabbed the police. Tsarong was then so excited that he made one soldier cut his ears and the other a leg but the latter succumbed to death by the injury after few hours. Tsarong Shappe was begged by all officers to excuse the guilty persons from cutting ears and leg but he turned his deaf ears. After that happening they all dispersed and returned to their respective houses, then in the evening of the same day rumours afloat that Tsarong Shappe will be put into trouble and will be killed by taking such independent action of murder. On the following morning while Tsoko [Tshögaw] was in bed Tsarong sent for him, he got up and went there say about 7AM and saw Sampose coming out from Tsarong's place and little later Khyungram Depon [commander] was also coming out there were about 2 or 3 minutes intervals between Sampose and Khyungram. Tsoko then went in and he was ordered by Tsarong that all officers are holding a meeting today in Mr. Laden La's house and that he must attend to this meeting, no sooner Tsarong ordered this to Tsoko, the latter took leave and promised to go to Mr. Laden La's place. When Tsoko came out he found Surkhang Depon was waiting outside the house so Surkhang went in and Tsoko returned. At about 10 o'clock Mr. Laden La sent twice for Tsoko. He went there and they hold meeting and drawn up an agreement to combine

73. Ibid. A variant of this holds that the lönchen told the officers that they should not present the matter to the Dalai Lama themselves but that Tsarong should go personally to the Dalai Lama and explain the situation (IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 28 August 1927).



15

Norbhu Dondup (on left) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

into one in making a representation on behalf of Tsarong Shappe to Dalai Lama stating that there are many Tibetan soldiers and unless the Tsarong Shappe has full power to punish any wicked soldier it is difficult to control them so they should represent such to the Dalai Lama and putting many other things in favour of military which Tsoko do not recalled now all details. While this agreement were drawing Major Pedma Chandra (who came from Calcutta University) asked Tsoko quietly to come to latrine they both went and Major Pedma Chandra said to Tsoko that he should select all his trusted soldiers and select from other regiments and then take Tsarong Shappe to Shigatse to fight against the Tibetan Government and that Pedma Chandra himself will select his own men (artillery) and prepare accordingly to fight against the Tibetan Govt.[74] On this Tsoko got wild and threatened the Pedma Chandra not to say so or else he shall report the matter, however, Pedma Chandra insisted and requested Tsoko but the latter did not agree to his secret conversation and after that they came in the house (Yamen) and signed. The agreement was signed by Trumba Dsasa, Mr. Laden La, Mondrong, Surkhang, Khyungram, Lhedingse, Ragashar, Tsoko, Nyelungwa, Magtrung Tamding, Sampose, Pedma Chandra and Phagdong Latsenpa. After signing the agreement in which they all agreed to represent matters to the Dalai Lama, these officers went to Tsarong Shappe's house and requested Tsarong to explain things to the Dalai Lama personally or in writing. Tsarong refused this flatly and said I am the Commander in Chief of the Tibetan Army and *I must have certain power, the Commander in Chief of British Army has every right in dealing such cases and why he should not follow same rule since the Tibetan have introduced British drill instructions and desire to follow their (British) rules and Regulations.* All officers could not make Tsarong listen to reason. Little later Khyungram called all officers outside and taken to another room where Tsarong Shappe's altar is and images of God and we should all take oath and should do what I say and asked Trumba Dzasa first. Trumba Dzasa took oath that he shall do everything to help his brethren officers and

74. Pedma Chandra was a Butanese national who was a *rupön* (captain). In 1923, when the group of Tibetan officers and men were sent to Quetta in Assam for training, he was hired as a translator. At the time he was teaching Tibetan at Calcutta University. He trained with the men and returned to Tibet with them. Bailey's recollections add credence to Tshögaw's story, as can be seen by a letter he wrote in 1924: "When I was about to leave Lhasa, the Dalai Lama sent me a secret message to say that he disliked Pedma Chandra, who had been speaking against the Tibetan and British governments, and that he would like to dismiss him but hesitated to do since he was a British subject."

shall listen to everything, provided that it is nothing against the Dalai Lama [his uncle], no sooner Trumba had said this and took oath everyone said that I shall do the same, I shall do the same. I shall do the same, when such things happened some of them suddenly said that since Tsarong Shappe would not listen to us, let us go to Lonchen Sholkang, they all agreed and went to Lonchen's house to seek advice and shown to Lonchen a draft representation with which all the officers wanted to go before the Dalai Lama. No sooner Lonchen read the representation, he returned the document to the officers and told them not to offer such long representations and not to go any one before the Dalai Lama, if you do so Dalai Lama will get annoyed and shall punish you all and since you came to me for my advice I suggest the best to help, this is what Lonchen said to them then the officers have returned and all the junior officers have said since they do not have to go to the Dalai Lama with the representation, they see no reason why everyone should go to Lonchen next day and it is advisable that 2 senior officers is quite sufficient to represent again before Lonchen and they named Trumpa Dzasa and Mr. Laden La as they are the two senior among the lot. This is all what Tsoko told me privately on my pressure to him I promised not to tell a word to any Tibetans but to you only. . he says he took oath not to tell anyone but to the Dalai Lama only if the things really comes out. . . . Further he tells me that there are 2 or 3 parties among the officers . [and that] they also wanted to murder the late Dronyer Chemo. Tsoko says that no sooner Tsoko refused to fight against Tibetan Govt. Mr. Laden La, Surkhangse, Khyungram and Pedma Chandra combined into one most secret society and in this Tsarong is also included. Another part Mondrong, Sampose, Lhedingse, and Phagdong Letsenpa, etc. Tsarong deals with everyone equally outwardly but his main mover are the four mentioned above . . . but about the revolution it may come out any moment and Tsarong Shappe is in the hot fire and everyone suspect very much of him and thinks that British Govt. may help him if he is put into trouble, this is bazaar rumour. It is also said that Tsarong Shappe told out that he has asked Barbar Shamsher of Nepal to help him if Tsarong writes to him. I am feeling that His Holiness must be thinking we are behind Tsarong Shappe or any other Tibetan military officers.[75]

[In a note to another letter to Bailey, Norbhu Döndup added:] Please add Youngest Kyipup's name also. The Pedma Chandra suggested to

75. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 30 August 1927 (emphasis added).

> murder Dronyer Chemo first and then take Tsarong to Shigatse with Tsoko's selected men to fight against Tibetan Government.[76]

Norbhu Döndup adds that the "Dalai Lama sent words through his favorite that he does not like to discuss matter with me about Mr. Laden La while in Tibet and says that many things happen, some have proof and some have no proof."[77] Moreover, in a later meeting the Dalai Lama told Norbhu that there were all sorts of wild rumors, but that, since these were difficult to prove, it was best to leave matters as they were.[78]

By Tshögaw's account, Tsarong and Ladenla orchestrated the appeal in the form of a long statement about the need for the military to have authority over its own troops. The lönchen advised against this and against going to the Dalai Lama in person. Thus, the copy of the petition that Ladenla sent to his British superior was apparently an abbreviated second version. Tshögaw's account also reveals that although all the officers took a sacred oath to support each other, there was no consensus regarding the use of force as a last resort. It seems clear, however, that some officers discussed taking military action as well as assassinating the Drönyerchemmo. Sambo (Rimshi) recalls his father's (Sambo Teiji's) account of a conversation he had with Tshögaw verifying this. Tshögaw said:

> We wanted to get rid of the Drönyerchemo Ara gaapo so we had no other way but to kill him. So we had a meeting and I was given the responsibility of killing him. So one morning I went to Norbulinga and walked straight into his house ignoring the normal courtesy of waiting outside. I walked straight into his room. The room was dark and there was something black in the back which I thought was he. I put my hand in my pocket where I was carrying a pistol and just before I was going to shoot him, I realized that there was no man there but only an old cloak which was sitting up straight. So I walked out of the room and asked the servant where the Drönyerchemmo was. The servant replied that he had gone to the Dalai Lama's room, so I thought that probably someone had

76. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 1 September 1927.
77. Ibid.
78. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 1 September 1927.

leaked out our plan and I immediately went to the southern gate of Norbulinga and asked the guards who had come that morning. They said that Salunga [another military officer] came early, just before sunrise. So I thought I should kill Salunga instead of Ara gaapo but all my other colleagues insisted I don't do that. So I left him alone.[79]

The heady but tense atmosphere of the times can be seen in a casual discussion between Major F. M. Bailey, the British political officer in Sikkim, and Tsarong about what would ensue when the Dalai Lama died:

[Bailey] asked him what would happen at the Dalai Lama's death. He said that there . . . would surely be trouble and he hoped that the military party would be strong enough to keep down any trouble. If they failed he would fly to India and ask the Government of India to give him work, preferably military work. What would save trouble would be if we [the British] would send up a representative and if necessary some troops on the death of the Dalai Lama. . . . I [Bailey] said I thought that the question would be decided on the first day or two as to whether the monks or the military party was going to control Tibet and that the people would join the victorious side.[80]

The Dalai Lama himself passed on a version of these events to the British through Khencung, the monk official who was the Tibetan trade agent in Gyantse. Khencung first told the story to Norbhu Döndup, who in turn told F. W. Williamson, the British trade agent in Gyantse. Williamson thought the information was so important that he invited Khencung to his residence so that he could hear the story firsthand. It is obvious that this was the Dalai Lama's attempt to provide the British with some coherent explanation of why everything they thought he was accomplishing had suddenly fallen apart; it also provides confirmation (and elaboration) that some of the military officers had discussed a plot against the government. Williamson's report of this discussion said:

Khencung said that the Dalai Lama called him to Norbulinga specially and told him that the real reason for the degradations of the military officers was that most of the military officers had combined together in a

79. Sambo (Rimshi), Interview. Tsarong had already left for India at this time.
80. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/214a, diary of F. M. Bailey's trip to Lhasa in 1924, entry for 8 August 1924, reporting a discussion with Tsarong.

plot to deprive His Holiness of his temporal power and to leave only religious affairs in his hands. The Khencung said he then told His Holiness that such an offense was punishable by the offender being thrown into a river in a sack to drown, on which the Dalai Lama remarked that he didn't wish to be so severe, especially since, if he disclosed the real reason he would have to punish Tsarong equally and wished to be lenient to him in view of his past services.

The Dalai Lama's story was that he had received a good many complaints from the National Assembly and the clerical party of high-handedness and extortion on the part of the military officers. His Holiness directed the Drönyerchemo to obtain the explanations of Tsarong Shape and various other officers. No explanations were furnished and when the Drönyerchemo became insistent, a meeting of military officers was called in a small room above the Jokhang. It is not clear how many people were present at the meeting. Tsarong Shape was present but he appeared diffident about addressing the meeting, and a speech was therefore made by Sardar Bahadur Laden la, in which he appealed to the officers to stick together and to support Tsarong Shape. He said that if the military officers combined, no one could resist them, and asked them all to take an oath to the effect that they would support one another and Tsarong Shape.

A number of officials were in agreement but others including Thrumba said they were prepared to agree and support one another so long as there was no movement against religion or the Dalai Lama. It seems that no agreement was reached and the meeting dispersed without a definite result. It is not clear when this meeting was held but it would seem to have been in early 1924.

Tsarong Shape left for India in September 1924 and shortly before his departure, an agreement was drawn up by Tsarong and Ladenla and other officers to deprive the Dalai Lama of his temporal power and only leave religious jurisdiction in his hands. It is a Tibetan custom to draw up and sign agreements of this kind when any persons combine together for any purpose. It is not clear whether the agreement provided or not that the temporal powers should be in the hands of Tsarong Shape, but this would appear to have been the intention. The agreement was signed by Tsarong and a number of others. Some, however, refused to sign, and the matter was reported to the Dalai Lama.

By some means the actual agreement had come into the Dalai Lama's hands. Khencung said His Holiness definitely said he had the agreement

> although Khencung didn't see it himself. Shortly afterwards, the plot having been abandoned, Tsarong Shape asked leave to go to India. The Dalai Lama told Khencung he was happy for him to go since it would get him out of the way while he thought the matter over. So far it does not seem that the officers suspected that the Dalai Lama knew anything of the affair.
>
> During Tsarong's absence the Dalai Lama decided to demote the officers and found various pretexts for doing so. He told Khencung he found various suitable pretexts for everyone except for Surkhang and eventually degraded him for intrigue with a woman. . . . The Khencung told me that everything . . . was told him directly by the Dalai Lama in a most secret manner.[81]

It is difficult to believe that the Dalai Lama would have been so lenient if he had really had proof of a plot. His account indicates, however, how far his thinking had altered since the time when Tsarong was his trusted favorite and the military his pet project.

The Dalai Lama's hesitancy in taking action appears to derive from four considerations: (1) there was no firm evidence of a plot; (2) he was unsure how various military officers would react if he attempted to arrest and severely punish some of them; (3) he did not want to harm his old friend Tsarong, as would have been necessary had trials been held for the other officers on charges of treason; and (4) after September 1924, Tsarong was in India and the Dalai Lama could not have known what he (and the British) would do if he arrested the other officers for treason. It is apparent that the Dalai Lama suspected British involvement in the military party's audacity. Ladenla was an Indian official, and it would have been unreasonable to assume he acted without

81. IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, 27 August 1926. It is widely claimed in Tibetan aristocratic circles that Thrumba Dzasa, the Dalai Lama's nephew, secretly went to his uncle and, in tears, told him that Tsarong might take away his power. Other charges against Tsarong held that he was in league with the British and was taking money from the Nepalese (Tsarong [Rimshi], interview and personal correspondence; Rinchen Drolma Taring, interview). Lungshar was apparently writing secretly to the Dalai Lama that the military was too strong and his authority would be in great danger unless precautionary measures were taken. This was told to Tsarong Shape by the Dalai Lama's other favorite, Kumbela, when Kumbela was in exile in India (Tsarong [Rimshi]), personal correspondence).

orders or at least official encouragement.[82] The suspicions of the Dalai Lama were strengthened when Ladenla was promoted by the British after he left Tibet in the autumn of 1925. The Dalai Lama felt so strongly about this that he wrote the following letter to Norbhu Döndup:

> A special letter. I hear that Dzasa Depon Laden La is being appointed the British Trade Agent at Yatung, vice Mr. MacDonald retiring. I do not know whether this is a fact. Of course, Laden La is a Sikkimese, who has faith in the Buddhist religion. He has been here for about a year, organizing the police and it has been found out that he is not altogether a steady and straightforward man and it is not known how he would serve to maintain the Anglo-Tibetan amity. Please therefore arrange, by representing the matter to the Lonchen (P.O.S.) [political officer in Sikkim], to appoint a British Officer.[83]

The Dalai Lama knew, however, that he could count on factions among the military officers to prevent the army officers from initiating military action without some strong provocation. Thus he decided, as he had done earlier about the monasteries, that the best course of action was to wait.

Six months later, in January 1925, another incident involving the police brought the conflict back into the spotlight. Two Lhasa policemen came face to face with two monks on a narrow road near Lhasa. They started abusing each other for not yielding the road, and the police arrested the monks despite an attempt to mediate by the head lama of Muru monastery (near Lhasa), who happened to arrive at this juncture. The policemen took the monks to their officer, Kisur (an aristocrat), who released the monks at the request of Muru Lama. At this time the police force was headed by Möndrong and a Lhasa magistrate who was not a police or military officer.

The Muru Lama complained to the Lhasa magistrate, so the latter sent for Kisur and the two offending policemen. The magistrate wanted Kisur to have the two policemen whipped, but Kisur refused, arguing

82. This is, however, precisely what happened.
83. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, the Dalai Lama's letter cited in letter from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, dated 7 October 1924.

that they had done nothing wrong. The magistrate then began to beat them himself. By this time a large group of police officers had gathered outside his office and raised a great uproar. Believing that they were threatening him, the Lhasa magistrate quietly left but reported the matter to the Drönyerchemmo the next day. The Dalai Lama then ordered the arrest of Kisur and another junior police officer, and again asked the Drönyerchemmo to investigate the affair.[84]

In the end, Kisur was dismissed from the government. He was forced to walk through the streets of Lhasa barefoot with his hair down, and he was imprisoned for life in distant Kongpo. Möndrong was also demoted from Khencung to a low rank and was posted to one of the most remote areas, near the Ladakh border.[85]

Although the Dalai Lama realized the importance of the military both for national defense and for control of the unruly monks, he had thought a strong and professional military, under the control of his trusted favorite Tsarong, would be completely subordinate to the government. He now found this to be unrealistic. Goaded on by the Drönyerchemmo, he chose in the end to weaken the military rather than risk their deposing him.

The Dalai Lama now decided to defuse the threat indirectly by demoting military officers one after another, for unrelated and often trivial reasons. Commanders Dingja and Sambo and Rupön Tshögaw were demoted to the fifth rank and relieved of their commands for cutting their hair in the British fashion. Surkhang was demoted for an extramarital alliance. Doring, Kyibu, and Pedma Chandra were also demoted for trivial reasons.[86] Pedma Chandra fled on horseback shortly after the dismissal of the officers and was killed when a pursuit party

84. IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from Williamson, British trade agent in Gyantse, to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 6 March 1925.

85. IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter of Williamson, the British trade agent in Gyantse, to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 10 April 1925; IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 14 August 1925.

86. IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 20 November 1927. With the exception of Surkhang, all these men had been trained by the British either in Gyantse or in Quetta and Shillong. The only remaining officer with British training was Thrumba Dzasa, and he was trained only in infantry. All the artillery officers had been purged.

overtook him. His head was brought back and exhibited in Lhasa with a notice saying that he had embezzled money and had spoken against the Dalai Lama.[87]

Meanwhile, news reached Lhasa that Tsarong was back from India and had reached Gyantse on or about 1 April 1925. The Dalai Lama sent a special messenger to meet him at Chushul (two days' journey from Lhasa) with an order relieving him of his position as commander-in-chief. Rinchen Dolma Taring, then married to Tsarong, remembers reading the order, which avoided the real reason but simply said: "By order of His Holiness the Dalai Lama we have decided that the second-in-command, Dzasa Trumba, can carry on the work of the Army head-quarters as there is no anxiety in the country at the moment, so we need not [have] a Commander-in-Chief."[88]

Although many members of the monastic faction advised the Dalai Lama also to expel Tsarong from the Kashag and to confiscate his property,[89] the Dalai Lama could not bring himself to do this. He allowed Tsarong to continue as a shape, although Tsarong never really regained his political power and was finally demoted from shape in 1930.

Thrumba, who was made junior commander-in-chief just before Tsarong left for India in 1924, then took over but, as Norbhu Döndup reported to Bailey, Thrumba was only authorized to supervise the troops and barracks and to keep the troops properly disciplined. In other words, he was not to be permitted to develop military policy and could call out the troops only with permission. The shapes were to control the decision making regarding military policy.[90]

The dismissal of Tsarong and the military officers began a period in which the military deteriorated badly. Norbhu Döndup visited Lhasa again in 1927 and poignantly described this decline:

87. IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 18 July 1925.

88. Taring 1970: 71. Lönchen Sholkang told Norbhu Döndup that Tibet did "not find any necessity of creating a post of Commander-in-Chief and that Tsarong Shape has been killing Sepoy [soldiers] and punishing heavily which were against the religion and further that Tsarong Shape has been exercising too much influence on various subjects" (IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 29 August 1925).

89. Ibid.

90. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 29 August 1925.

> [The] Military are drilling daily but their uniforms are practically all torn, many of them have got one boot on one foot and the other is naked and they always beg me whenever I passed Norbulinga and Chenselinga. The police are about 100 in number and they are more worse than the military. I find everyone either in the police or military desire to run away from here if they can manage to do so.[91]

It also terminated Tibet's attempts to modernize and encouraged the Dalai Lama's autocracy and dependence on favorites. Norbhu Döndup reported during his Lhasa visit in 1927 that the Dalai Lama had no faith in the Kashag and little in the lönchen and that he did everything without consulting the appropriate government officers. Norbhu Döndup also said that everyone was very afraid of the Dalai Lama.[92]

Norbhu Döndup urged Bailey to persuade the British government to try to reverse the anti-British, anti-modernization attitudes of the Tibetan government, but London categorically refused. The political officer made this clear in a letter to Norbhu Döndup:

> You should not ask for reinstatement of any officers—you should find out the Dalai Lama's attitude toward the events and ask him if we can help in any way. He may himself suggest reinstatement but the F.O. [Foreign Office] think it is too much interference to suggest it (there are only 2 ways of pulling the army together again—either reinstate the officers already trained—or train fresh officers).[93]

The Dalai Lama for his part, did not suggest reinstatement and did not take up Norbhu Döndup's offer to help in any way, as by training fresh officers.

91. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, political officer in Sikkim, dated 26 August 1927.

92. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letters from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, dated 25 and 26 August 1927. Norbhu Döndup also was in fear for his life. He wrote to Bailey that he had been informed that "some people in Lhasa . are against me and speaking badly as I am a strong puller between the British and Tibetan Government and desire to do harm to me . . however, I shall be careful for my life and shall not die before I have murdered at least two, as I have my rifle and pistol which shall now be kept always loaded" (IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 12 August 1925).

93. IOR, Mss.Eur. F.157/240, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa, dated 14 August 1925.

Although Tibet was able to maintain its de facto independence during the two decades following the Dalai Lama's triumphant return to Lhasa in 1913, these decades were filled with intermittent military conflict on the Kham/China border. The Simla Convention of 1913–1914 did not produce the secure political status the Tibetan government had expected, since the Chinese refused to sign it, although Tibet did gain in that Britain and India negotiated and signed agreements with Tibet independent of China. In retrospect, however, this proved small consolation for the insecurity of facing a gigantic neighbor who threatened at any time to launch a new military attack. Compounding this danger was the Dalai Lama's decision to weaken the military and to retreat from the program of modernization.

4

THE DEATH OF THE 13TH DALAI LAMA

At sunrise on the morning of the twenty-fifth day of the tenth Tibetan month of the Water-Bird year (12 December 1933), the monks of the Upper Tantric college (Gyutö) in Lhasa walked to the Potala Palace for their annual audience with the Dalai Lama.[1] By 9 A.M. they had gathered in the courtyard outside one of the Potala's assembly halls. The monks had no idea that anything was amiss on that day. The Dalai Lama had attended a parallel public audience held for the monks of the Lower Tantric college the day before, and the 25th was additionally important because it was the anniversary of the death of Tsongkhapa, the fifteenth-century founder of the Gelugpa sect.

However, the officials of the Upper Tantric college were informed that the Dalai Lama was feeling ill and would not appear. Instead would be held what is known in Tibet as a "throne audience" or "inviting the clothes," with the Dalai Lama's ceremonial robe placed on the throne as a substitute for the ruler himself.[2] One monk recalled: "The moment I entered the room I saw not the Dalai Lama but his clothes. I felt so bad when I saw this that I started to cry [because] I had some kind of feeling that the Dalai Lama was going to die. I cried a lot."[3] Al-

1. The Upper Tantric college was one of the two monastic institutions in Lhasa that specialized in the teaching of Tantric Buddhism. It contained 500 monks, most of whom entered as advanced students after studying in other Gelugpa monasteries.
2. In Tibetan the terms are, respectively, *thrijey* and *namsa denshu*.
3. Temba Chönden, interview.

though the monks that day were told that the Dalai Lama's illness was not serious, five days later the 13th Dalai Lama died.

The Dalai Lama had been sick for about twelve days with what had seemed to be another of the colds or bouts of flu that frequently afflicted him. His biography reports that he was experiencing a loss of appetite and shortness of breath when he walked any distance,[4] but because he rarely complained about how he felt, it was difficult for even his close personal attendants to gauge the seriousness of an illness. In fact, only repeated urgings by his closest attendants brought him to agree to miss the Upper Tantric college ceremony, even though his condition had worsened after the previous day's audience.

The chronology of events of the Dalai Lama's last five days is somewhat uncertain. After his failure to appear before the Upper Tantric college, there was talk in Lhasa about his illness. It was not considered serious, however, and Kumbela, the Dalai Lama's closest favorite, did not officially notify the Kashag or the lönchen of it. On the twenty-sixth, people asking about the Dalai Lama's health were told that he had improved and was walking a bit.[5] Nonetheless, after a few more days, word leaked out that the Dalai Lama was still ill, and some of the monasteries began offering prayers for his speedy recovery. The Upper Tantric college, for example, started twenty-four-hour prayer sessions on the twenty-eighth, continuously chanting the Prayer of Long Life, eating in the monastic prayer hall, and taking breaks only to relieve themselves.[6] Others, however, such as the Taring aristocratic family, heard nothing about the Dalai Lama's sickness until his death.[7]

On the twenty-ninth, Kumbela became frightened when the Dalai Lama started to pant for breath. He sent for Nechung, a state oracle. At this point he also informed the lönchen and the Kashag.[8]

4. Phur lcog 1935: 315–16.
5. Surkhang 1968.
6. The Prayer of Long Life is *tshesung* in Tibetan.
7. There were, of course, no newspapers or radio stations in Lhasa.
8. Surkhang 1968. There were three state oracles in Tibet: Nechung, Gadong, and Samye. The first two had been the personal protectors of the Dalai Lamas before they gained control over Tibet; when the 5th Dalai Lama took power in 1642 they automatically became the state oracles. These protective deities are known as *chökyong* or *sungma*, and the official name for state oracles is *shungden dralha*. The state oracles were communicated with by means of a medium, called in Tibetan *guten* or *chöje*. This medium would

The government, as custom dictates, immediately asked several important lamas to visit the Dalai Lama and to request that he remain in his body. As a Bodhiśattva who has rejected his own enlightenment and repeatedly incarnates in order to assist people along the road to enlightenment, he can vacate his material body whenever he chooses rather than passively wait for "natural" death. The lamas sent by the government went to the Dalai Lama's quarters in the Norbulinga Palace early on the morning of the thirtieth. However, only the ex–Ganden Thripa, Chamba Chödrak, was admitted.[9] Almost immediately the Nechung medium arrived.

Traditionally, when the Dalai Lama was ill the Nechung oracle was formally invoked by the official medium, who at this time was Gowochöje Lobsang Sonam. The deity then entered the medium's body and answered questions put to him. On this occasion, the Nechung oracle said that the Dalai Lama should take a medicine known as "the seventeen heroes for subduing colds" (*chamjom pawo chupdün*) and himself prepared the medicine in a cup with water. Most respondents report that the Dalai Lama refused the dose and that the state oracle had literally to pour it into his mouth. The Dalai Lama's condition immediately deteriorated, and by noon he was unconscious. He never said another word.[10]

In the late afternoon the Dalai Lama's situation became grave. The lamas and the Nechung oracle (who was in trance) were again summoned. They prostrated before the Dalai Lama and, in accordance with custom, requested him to recover and live long but asked that, if he had determined to die, he would make the true incarnation return soon. The Dalai Lama opened his eyes once but gave no reply.

On the evening of the thirtieth (17 December 1933), at about 6:30

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go into a shamanistic trance to act as the vehicle for communication with the deity who would possess his body. Nechung's monastery is just below Drepung (see Map 2).

9. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) (1984: 66–67) says that Kumbela later claimed that the Dalai Lama saw them coming from his window and ordered him to permit only Chamba Chödrak to enter.

10. Phur lcog 1935: 316. Bell (1946: 388) reports that Nechung gave the medicine at about 3 A.M. on the thirtieth, before the lamas and shapes arrived. His source also reports that when the medium came out, the Dalai Lama's doctor, Chambala, said, "You have made a mistake in the medicine." All our other sources claim that this exchange between the doctor and the medium never occurred.

P.M., as dusk arrived, the fifty-eight-year-old 13th Dalai Lama died, just as he had seemed to prophesy a year earlier in his "Political Last Testament."[11]

Shakabpa, an aristocrat, recalls that evening:

> I went to my brother's house in Lhasa and we quickly made preparations to go to the Tsuglagang Temple to pray and make offerings. On the streets the tolling of the dama drums on the roof of the Potala could be heard [signifying the death of the Dalai Lama] and when we arrived, there were people all over making offerings with tears streaming down their faces.

A monk from the Upper Tantric college also recalled:

> On the night of the 30th we were doing our twenty four hour continuous prayers. Just before dawn [about 3:30 A.M.], we took a break to urinate and when I looked out toward Sera monastery I saw it was full of lights on the roof. Then I looked at the Potala Palace and also saw a lot of light and heard the ritual drums. I knew at once then that the Dalai Lama had died [because butter lamps are placed outside only in rituals connected with death or on the anniversary days of a death].[12]

For seventeen years after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, Tibet was ruled by two regents, Reting Rimpoche until 1941 and Taktra Rimpoche until 1950. This interregnum period was characterized by a preoccupation with internal political affairs and intrigues which, to a significant degree, consumed the vitality of the political and monastic elite. The chapters that follow will elucidate these events and the actors and motives behind them, explicating the confrontation that occurred

11. In the Water-Monkey year (1932–1933) the 13th Dalai Lama wrote a political statement in which he implied that he would die soon. The following quote is from the Lhalungpa translation cited by A lo chos mdzad (1983: 29): "I am now in the fifty-eighth year of my life. Everyone must know that I may not be around for more than a few years to discharge the temporal and spiritual responsibilities." (Note that Tibetans count themselves as one year old at birth; he was only fifty-seven according to the Western system.)

12. Temba Chönden, interview. A *dama* is a type of drum similar to the Indian *tabla*, but it is struck with sticks rather than the hand. A number of these drums, each tuned to a different pitch, were normally used. They were traditionally played by the Dalai Lama's "dancers" (*gardrugpa*) on the roof of the Potala Palace on the death anniversaries of Tsongkhapa and all past Dalai Lamas. They were also used when a Dalai Lama died and when other great lamas participated in ceremonial processions. Different drumbeats are used for different occasions.

between the forces of change and of conservatism in a system that tried to confront the future without moving out of the past.

The death of the Dalai Lama immediately raised the question of whether the leadership would be able to maintain Tibet's de facto political status in the face of inevitable pressures from China.

On 21 December 1933, four days after the Dalai Lama's death, the Tibetan Kashag, the lönchen, and the National Assembly voiced their resolve in a telegram sent to China:

> From—All the High Monk and Lay Officials and the Public of Tibet, Lhasa
> To—(1) The Nationalist Government, Nanking
> To—(2) Chiang Kaishek, Nanking
> Although experiencing the greatest bereavement owing to the temporary passing away of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Selon head of Government and Kasag the State Council are conducting all affairs as before. As the representatives Khempo Kunchog Jungney Ngagwang Dakpa Ngawang Gyaltsen and Thobten Chupel are in China please refer to them all matters so as to bring about the most amicable relations. On the other hand should any steps be taken as a result of the influence of persons who want to create trouble between the two countries such action will never be tolerated even if reduced to the last man in this country. Please give this matter your most careful consideration and send us a reply.[13]

To the British the Tibetan government sent the following communiqué on 2 January 1934:

> Please convey our grateful thanks to His Majesty the King for the deep and sincere expression of sympathy on the apparent passing away of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Services with offerings of prayers for a speedy reincarnation are being held and at the same time the friendly Anglo-Tibetan relations and the civil and military affairs of the State are progressing as before.[14]

13. IOR, L/PS/12/4178. This telegram was sent uncoded in English via Gangtok and was copied by the political officer in Sikkim, who enclosed it in a letter to Delhi, dated 21 December 1933.

14. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, cited in full in letter from the Government of India (India Office) to Sir Clive Wigram, Buckingham Palace, dated 24 January 1934.

The Chinese government responded by informing Tibet that they wished to send an official mission to Lhasa to convey their condolences and to make appropriate ceremonial offerings. The Kashag wanted to deny them entry, but in response to the strenuous objections of the monastic segment, they agreed to convene the National Assembly to discuss the issue. The dominant opinion among government officials in the assembly was that under no circumstances should the Chinese be granted permission to enter Tibet. They argued that this had been Tibet's policy under the late Dalai Lama. The monastic segment emphatically disagreed, arguing that the proposed Chinese visit was purely religious. They contended that the Chinese would be religious pilgrims and that Tibet, a Buddhist country, could not refuse them permission to pay their condolences. As was usual in the assembly, the monastic viewpoint dominated. Tsipön Lungshar, a key figure in the first few months after the death of the Dalai Lama, feared that the Chinese condolence mission would be used to restore a Chinese presence in Lhasa. On 29 December 1933 Lungshar secretly informed the British political officer in Sikkim of his fears:

> The Chinese Government have been telegraphing the Prime Minister, the Kashag and the National Assembly in a pressing manner, saying they would send a reliable man as their representative immediately to discuss matters. It has become definite that the Chinese representative should come. Therefore the British Government should pay attention to the matter. I am writing this privately.[15]

As can be seen from the following report of *The Times* of London's correspondent in Shanghai, Lungshar's fears were not misplaced. The Chinese view of this mission was clearly political:

> It is reported from Nanking that the leading Lamas and people of Tibet welcome the proposed dispatch of a Chinese High Commissioner to Lhasa and will continue to be loyal to the Chinese Government. The

15. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 21 December 1933.

> Tashi [or Panchen] Lama who fled from Tibet to China several years ago and has since been a highly honoured guest in this country is being consulted by the Government with a view to the restoration of China's influence in Tibet.[16]

Tibet's fight to maintain her de facto independence was on.

16. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, 28 December 1933, f. 375.

5

THE FALL OF KUMBELA

The drums on the Potala Palace roof beat a sorrowful dirge, spreading the news of the Dalai Lama's death throughout Lhasa. Prayer flags and other house decorations were taken down, and people dressed in traditional mourning: dark colors, with no aprons and no earrings or other jewelry. Singing, dancing, and playing music were banned; butter lamps burned on household altars and on house roofs; and people offered prayers in the holy Tsuglagang Temple.

The period of mourning for the Dalai Lama was also a time of profound political realignment. Since political succession operated on the principle of incarnation,[1] periods recurred when there was no Dalai Lama, or one too young to rule. In this case, the "consciousness" of the 13th Dalai Lama did not reincarnate until July 1935, nineteen months after his death. Since the Dalai Lamas generally assumed political control at the age of eighteen, the 14th Dalai Lama would not have assumed control of the government until about 1953—a full twenty years after the death of his predecessor. A long transitional period under a regency therefore began in 1933.

The regent did not have to be an incarnate lama. Some say that the 13th Dalai Lama had intended to appoint a monk lönchen to rule together with the lay Lönchen Langdün,[2] and others clearly advocated a

1. The "consciousness" (*sem*) of an incarnate lama attaches itself in the womb at the moment of conception.

2. Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms. The custom of appointing a high lama to the position of regent was begun by the Manchu at the time of the 7th Dalai Lama's death (Surkhang ms.; Dung dkar [Dunggar] 1983: 125).

lay regent. But while there was no unanimity regarding possible regents, all higher Tibetan officials shared the view that the time was dangerous and volatile. The wrong political allegiance could have disastrous effects on individuals and families. Thus, mingled with the sorrow brought about by the death of the Dalai Lama, Lhasa was filled with a heightened sense of tension.

RIVALS FOR POWER

The logical regent should have been the Lönchen Langdün, Kunga Wangchug, who was the highest official after the death of the Dalai Lama (see Figure 16). Langdün was the nephew of the 13th Dalai Lama. He had served as lönchen since 1926, when he was only nineteen, and for two years before that as assistant to the famous prime minister, Sholkang. But Langdün at twenty-six was considered immature and somewhat foolish, a pleasant but weak and indecisive person who was unfit to lead Tibet during this critical period. Behind his back he was known by the derogatory nickname of Phungu phochen, "the castrated donkey," poking fun at his dullness and his inability to sire a child.

By far the most powerful figure at the time of the death of the Dalai Lama was his twenty-eight-year-old personal attendant, Kumbela (see Figure 17). Though not a government official, he had been a favorite of the Dalai Lama since he was a youth and had wielded almost absolute power in the last two years. While Kumbela had many supporters among the government officials, he also had made powerful enemies by usurping their authority. These officials resented the immense power this uneducated young peasant boy had exercised and chafed under the necessity of taking orders from him.

Kumbela was born in 1905 to a small "taxpayer" serf family in Nyemo, an area southwest of Lhasa.[3] His original name, Dechen Chödrön, was a name normally given to girls, but when Kumbela's mother was having difficulty giving birth, a lama had told her to say prayers and give her unborn child a girl's name. Unusual, therefore, from the beginning, Kumbela, like many village children, spent his

3. Lha 'dzoms sgrol dkar 1984: 135.



16.

Lonchen Langdun (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)



17.

Kumbela in Kalimpong (ca. 1937–1946)

early youth happily, playing and helping his family by shepherding their animals. When he reached the age of twelve, however, his life suddenly changed.[4]

Many service positions in Tibet were recruited as payment of the corvée tax obligations of serf families. If, for example, an aristocratic or monastic lord needed an additional servant, he would inform his serf families to send a youth of the specified age and sex. The Dalai Lama and the government also recruited scribes from serf families in E (in Lhoka) and from Kumbela's own region of Nyemo.[5] In 1916, when Dechen was twelve, his family was ordered to send him to Lhasa for this purpose. The family appealed because Kumbela was the only son; in response they were granted an extra tax concession but were still forced to send him.

Dechen's first few years in Lhasa were difficult. He studied writing with a very strict teacher and received a salary so small that his family had to send him food supplements. Then an incident occurred that changed his future. One day, when he and a few other scribes were in the palace stable watching two grooms playing Tibetan dice, the 13th Dalai Lama came in and scolded them for wasting their time. The Dalai Lama actually hit them with his rosary and ordered that they receive lashings the next day. Rather than face the flogging, Dechen and another scribe ran away that night. The grooms who were sent to find them quickly caught up with them. Dechen, now terrified of his punishment, jumped in the river, to escape or die, but a groom jumped in after him and pulled him out. To Dechen's amazement, the Dalai Lama treated him extremely kindly and Dechen responded by applying himself diligently to his studies.[6] He quickly learned the *uchen* and cursive scripts, and then learned gardening and virtually all the handicrafts.

Dechen's abilities came to the attention of the Dalai Lama, who took him into his household servant corps. There he gradually became a full-

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. Known as *itrugpa* or *epa,* these boys were conscripted for life. They were trained to be calligraphers in the Tibetan script called *uchen* and carvers of the woodblocks used to print Tibetan xylographic texts. They also copied official reports and files and kept the diary of the Dalai Lama's daily activities.

6. Ibid.: 136–37.

fledged personal attendant, or *kucar.*[7] In 1921, the Dalai Lama enrolled Dechen in the Sera Che college, although he continued to serve the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama also gave him his new monk's name, Thubten Kumbe(la).

Kumbela became much closer to the Dalai Lama than attendants usually did. F. W. Williamson, the political officer of Sikkim, described this relationship in an account of an official reception he attended in 1933:

> The Dalai Lama was attended with tea on the dais by Kusho Kunphel La, a tall rather good-looking young man of 28. He is, next to the Dalai Lama, undoubtedly the most powerful person in Tibet. He holds no official rank, but is always in personal attendance on the Dalai Lama who is very fond of him and treats him like a son. He has immense influence over the Dalai Lama. . He is extremely clever and intelligent and his talents would bring him to the fore anywhere.[8]

On the occasion of showing a motion picture to the Dalai Lama, Williamson again observed that the Dalai Lama's "fondness for Kunphel La was obvious."[9]

In the 1920s, Kumbela took responsibility for overseeing a series of important construction tasks such as the renovation of the east section of the Potala Palace and the construction of the Jensey Palace in Norbulinga, which was to become the main residence of the Dalai Lama.

In 1931, the Dalai Lama appointed Kumbela, still in his twenties, to be the head of an important new office complex called the Trapchi Lotrü Laygung, the "Trapchi Electrical Machine Office." Located in Trapchi, about three miles north of Lhasa, this complex merged previously

7. *Kucar* literally means "be/arrive in the presence." These attendants were also known as *jensey,* or "favorite" (literally, "visible to the eyes"), because they were constantly in the Dalai Lama's presence. They functioned basically as his personal servants, and as such had ready access to his private living quarters. The term *jensey* also had political connotations: it was used to describe those select political advisors for whom the English term *favorite* is a close approximation. It should be noted that although all *kucar* could be called *jensey* in the general sense, they might not be favorites in the political sense. Kumbela, however, gradually came to be a *jensey* in both senses.

8. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, letter from F. W. Williamson, political officer in Sikkim, to the Government of India, reporting on his 1933 mission to Lhasa, dated 6 January 1934.

9. Ibid.

separate offices such as the various coin and currency mints and the munitions factories.[10] The racks of its well-built armory could hold several thousand rifles. Its machinery was driven by power from a hydroelectric plant in the Dode valley (east of Sera monastery). Williamson said of Trapchi in 1933, "The whole place had an air of energy and efficiency which is rare in Tibet."[11] Kumbela's success here marked the culmination of his rise to power.

After the Dalai Lama's death, the key to Kumbela's power became his control over the crack Trongdra Regiment he had created in 1931 after an outbreak of fighting in Eastern Tibet convinced him that Tibet needed a modern, efficient army regiment. He persuaded the Dalai Lama to recruit 1,000 soldiers as a corvée tax levy from the trongdra or "better families" and to provide the troops with the best arms, training, food, and salaries. A controversial aspect of this plan was that to this unit the better families had to send their own sons; they could not substitute servants or mercenaries to serve in their place, as was commonly done. Planning started in late 1931 or early 1932, after Kumbela became head of the Trapchi complex. The first troops were assembled for training in late 1932 under the command of Yuthok and Taring (see Figure 18).

Taring recalled how he first came to be associated with the Regiment.

> At that time [1932] I had just finished schooling in India and was staying at my estate in Gyantse when I received a telegram from the government saying that they are sending twenty-five soldiers for a special six-month training course in the use of machine guns to be given by the British in Canglo, an area nearby Gyantse. These were the first machine guns to be used in Tibet. The cable asked me to serve as translator as well as study together with them.[12]

After the six-month training period, this group returned to Lhasa.

> I remember that when we arrived there I noticed that the Dalai Lama and Kumbela were watching from outside the northern gate of the pal-

10. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, report of the political officer in Sikkim about the 1933 British mission to Lhasa, dated 1 March 1933.
11. Ibid.
12. J. Taring, interview.



18.

(Left to right) Commanders Yuthok and Taring (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

ace. The troops offered a salute to the Dalai Lama . . . and then we took the machine guns off the mules and set them up, making sure to point them toward the outer gate and not the palace. The Dalai Lama then came and inspected the four machine guns and asked a number of questions. After this he said, "It's okay," and retired into the palace. . . . After a one-week vacation, we began to train and drill every day on a field at Nortölinga [a part of Norbulinga below the west gate of the Jensey Palace]. We took apart the weapons and put them back together again and practiced shooting them. We also trained twenty mules from the Dalai Lama's stable to carry the machine guns and to jump over canals and ditches. The Dalai Lama and Kumbela used to come to the drill grounds and watch us. [The Dalai Lama] was very interested in these activities and pleased by the performance.[13]

13. Ibid.

Kumbela decided that, unlike those in other regiments, the soldiers in the Trongdra Regiment would have short hair as in Western ("modern") armies. All Tibetan laymen wore their hair in one or two braids; the conscripts had to cut their hair for the first time in their lives. Many of the recruits were deeply upset by this, as the first Tibetan police under Ladenla had been a decade earlier when they were forced to cut their braids. Taring remembers seeing some nomad recruits carrying their severed hair plaits and weeping. This made such an impact in Lhasa that several street songs were sung about the regiment and its rules.

> By the harsh power of Lords,
> [I] have been put into the Trongdra Regiment;
> [My] hair, which was like a beautiful flower,
> has been completely cut down like a willow tree.
>
> The favorite, Kumbela,
> needs soldiers from better families.
> I have no idea how it will all turn out in the end,
> [But for now] I have no choice but to say yes.[14]

Kumbela treated the Trongdra Regiment with unabashed favoritism. Its special uniforms had been ordered from Calcutta, with overcoats for winter use. The insignias on the shoulders and hats of the officers and NCOs were of pure gold, minted at Kumbela's personal expense. The newly built regimental headquarters at Trapchi (near Kumbela's other seat of power in the Trapchi complex) was large and comfortable. Food and salary were also superior to those of the other military units. Taring recalled Kumbela's direct supervision of this regiment:

> Kumbela would mix vitamins specially blessed by the Dalai Lama into the soldiers' tea and soup [*thukba*]. He would bring in his car sacks of special dry meat which would be mixed in the soup. He was very kind to the soldiers. Since the northern gate of the military garrison was close to the northern gate of the Trapchi Office, all six officers of the regiment

14. Ibid. In Tibetan: *dpon po'i sku dbang btsan pa / grong drag dmag la bcug byung / dbu skra gsar ling 'jang pa / lcang ling yug gcod btang song. spyan gsal kun 'phel lags la / grong drag dmag mi dgos gis / phugs su 'khyol min gang shes / lags so ma zhus rang zhus.*

> had to stand by to salute Kumbela each morning as he came by car to the Trapchi Office. He would return the salute and would only stop if he had some instructions to give us. The regiment was the favorite brainchild of Kumbela. The bodyguard regiment had fallen from its former power and prestige [and our regiment had taken its place].[15]

F. W. Williamson, the British political officer in Sikkim, was impressed when he inspected the regiment in 1933. He reported to the Government of India that "outside the regular units of the British and Indian armies, I have never seen such smartness and precision."[16]

The Trongdra Regiment surpassed all other military forces then present in Tibet in training and equipment and was unique in its subordination to one person. Taring's orders came directly from Kumbela; the Kashag and the office of the commander-in-chief, the normal bureaucratic channels, were simply bypassed. This military force, in possession of Tibet's first machine guns, had the potential to take control of Lhasa, and Kumbela could have commanded them to do so, particularly if he had been able to concoct an "incident."

Taring gave another instance of Kumbela's amazing power and authority:

> During the Gyetor festival of the Water-Bird year [1933] I was formally commissioned as a government official.[17] At this time I requested that my father should be permitted to resign. . . . Kumbela said this would be done. He further said that I should take the rank of Rimshi [fourth rank] which was held by my father. Kumbela was a very decisive person. He told me that I need not go to other people and spend funds unnecessarily [in gifts to obtain this rank], since he would take care of it. But I told him that I did not want to take the rank of rimshi since I am quite young and without experience. However, I told him that since I belong to the royal family of Sikkim, I would like to be given the rank of seynamba.[18]

15. Ibid.
16. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, reporting on a visit to Lhasa in 1933, dated 6 January 1934.
17. On the Gyetor Festival, a holiday on the eighth of the third Tibetan month, government officials change from winter to summer dress.
18. J. Taring, interview. Kumbela agreed and this was done.

Kumbela issued orders independently of the government bureaucracy and expected compliance without confirmation from either the Kashag or the Dalai Lama. During this period, at the height of his power, Kumbela's orders could not be differentiated from those of the Dalai Lama and were invariably obeyed.

The creation and the personalization of this regiment was not without risks, however. Many supporters of Kumbela advised him not to alienate the "better families" by forbidding them to send substitutes instead of their sons. Others tried to convince him that these boys were not used to hard work and discipline, but Kumbela would not listen. Kumbela also aroused enmity by issuing commands to older officials and by his ostentatious use of the Dalai Lama's Baby Austin car.

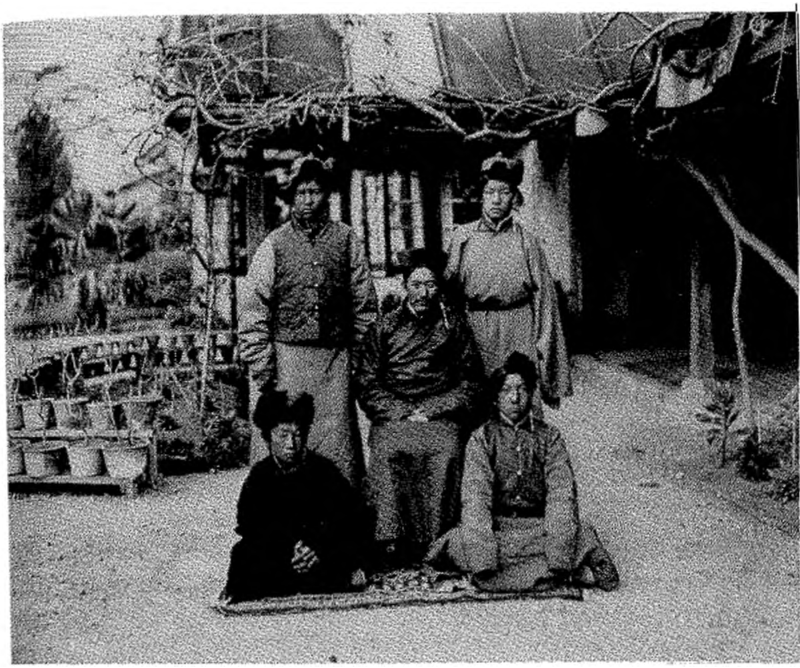
Although Kumbela paid no attention to the resentment he was arousing, even the 13th Dalai Lama apparently had reservations about the implications of Kumbela's building a power base in Trapchi. Several of our respondents passed on a story told by the late Tsarong Shape. In early 1933, Tsarong was invited to the Dalai Lama's living quarters when the Dalai Lama was about to dine. Kumbela served the Dalai Lama and then served Tsarong. Then Kumbela tossed a napkin to His Holiness in apparent anger and left. After awhile the Dalai Lama told Tsarong to accompany him to the roof. From there he pointed to Kumbela's car heading toward Trapchi. Staring at the car in the distance, he said somewhat sadly, "Now he's trying to do something, to build up the mint and the military. I don't know how things will go. Its very difficult to say what will happen in the future." Then, implying that he was worried about Kumbela's future after his own death, he said, "You should see that it goes through properly," thus indirectly telling Tsarong to help Kumbela if he got into trouble.[19]

Williamson, sensing Kumbela's precarious position, wrote that Kumbela "has many enemies and will be in a very difficult position after the death of the Dalai Lama."[20]

A third powerful figure, and Kumbela's key rival, was the fifty-two-year-old lay official Tsipön Lungshar (Dorje Tsegyal) (see Figures 19

19. Gelek (Rimpoche), interview.

20. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, reporting on a visit to Lhasa in 1933, dated 6 January 1934.



19.

Lungshar and the four Tibetan students just before leaving for England (ca. 1912) (photo courtesy of India Office of Library and Records, British Library)

and 20). Unlike Kumbela, with his humble peasant origin, Lungshar was an aristocrat whose family had served under the 5th Dalai Lama.[21] He entered government service when he was about twenty and was quickly appointed a junior officer (*tsipa*) in the Tsigang Office.[22]

An unusually talented man, Lungshar was a Tibetan physician who continued to treat patients even after he became a high official, and he

21. Lungshar's family name means "eastern area" and derives from the location of their estate in the eastern part of Tanag district in Tsang Province. His family was from the lower or "common" (*trunggo gyüma*) aristocracy (Lha klu [Lhalu] 1985: 93).

22. Ibid. He held this post for many years and came to be known as Tsipa Lungshar for the remainder of his life, regardless of his later positions.



20.

(Left to right) unknown, Lady Lhalu, Lungshar and wife, Lungshar's children (1931)

was also a skilled musician. He played two stringed instruments, the *yangcin* and the *hochin,* and he frequently met with other musicians in Lhasa to participate in "jam sessions." He was adept with figures and accounting and was knowledgeable about religion, being widely considered to be expert in "mirror divination" (*thrabab*) and black magic (*dey*). Some believe he was an incarnate Nyingmapa Lama who was never identified. Surprisingly, Lungshar was also one of the few Tibetan officials with a broad understanding of the world. He had lived and traveled in England and Western Europe and was familiar with Western history. His exposure to European political systems and history convinced him that reforms were necessary if Tibet was to survive in the modern world.

Lungshar went to Europe when the Dalai Lama decided in 1912 to follow the advice of Sir Charles Bell and send four youths to England for a Western education.[23] He appointed Lungshar to accompany these

23. Bell 1968: 162–63.

boys.[24] Lungshar was not simply a chaperone. His official credentials stated that he was also "proceeding to offer presents to the Great British Government. He has been invested with power to discuss matters for the benefit of Tibet."[25] Lungshar's ambassador-at-large status brought him into conflict with the British and Indian governments, which were adamant that Tibet should not have direct foreign relations with other countries. As soon as Lungshar reached India, the British discovered his meeting with the Chinese and Japanese in Calcutta, both of whom they suspected of wanting to induce Lungshar not to send the boys to England. The Japanese apparently were willing to pay all costs involved in educating the boys if they were sent to Japan. The British were infuriated by Lungshar's dealings, and Basil Gould, who was accompanying the Tibetans, wrote to Bell recommending that the Dalai Lama recall Lungshar.[26]

After Lungshar and the boys arrived in England, the British physically isolated him by housing him in the countryside and instructing Ladenla, an English-speaking Tibetan (Sikkimese) employee of the Indian government, to stay with him. Lungshar, however, considered himself a high official on an important mission and was determined not to let the British control his contacts and movements. Gould commented in a letter written soon after Lungshar arrived in England:

> I have reason to suspect that Kusho Lungshar has in his possession presents and possible papers also which are intended for representatives of foreign places, and he does not disguise the fact that he intends at some time to set up an establishment in London, where he could be independent of Ladenla and myself. It is perhaps known that some two years ago the Dalai Lama proposed to proceed to London, in order to solicit the help of the British Government in evicting the Chinese from Tibet, and that he intended, if this help should be refused, to approach the Ambas-

24. The four young aristocrats selected were Khenrab Künsang Möndrong, seventeen, who eventually studied mining, Sonam Gombo Gorkhawa, sixteen, who eventually studied military science, Rinzin Dorje Ringang (Changöba), eleven, who eventually studied electrical engineering, and Wangdu Norbu Kyibu, sixteen, who eventually studied surveying, map making, and telegraphy (IOR, L/PS/10/400, letter from B. Gould, British trade agent at Gyantse, to the deputy secretary of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, dated 29 March 1913).

25. IOR, L/PS/12/400, Register no. 1968, translation of credentials of Lungshar, dated the fifteenth of the eleventh month of the Water-Mouse year (24 December 1912).

26. IOR, L/PS/10/400, letter from B. Gould to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 9 April 1913.

> sadors of foreign places on the subject. It is not unlikely that Kusho Lungshar cherishes similar ideas—he may even be entrusted with a similar commission—and I understand that on this account Government desires that he should be dissuaded from taking up residence in London, where it would be difficult to watch or restrain his actions.[27]

Despite initial British attempts to treat Lungshar as merely a minor official, he tenaciously exercised his independence, angering the British in the process. When he arrived in England, he talked of visiting the United States, Germany, and other countries; he insisted on an interview with King George V and with members of the Cabinet, to present gifts from the Dalai Lama; and he forced the British to move him to London, although not until after they had tried, as the following letter from Sir Charles Bell to the Dalai Lama shows, to have the Dalai Lama recall him:

> The Secretary of State for India thinks that the retention of Lungsharpa in England will simply increase the expense to the Tibetan Government and doubts whether his stay there will be of any use to the Tibetan Government. Therefore, it is intended to send the presents from the great British Emperor to Your Holiness through him. Kindly order Lungsharpa to bring the presents from the great British Emperor. Lungsharpa should leave England in the end of June to bring back the presents. So will Your Holiness very kindly send the instructions to him now?[28]

To the chagrin of the British, however, the Dalai Lama refused to comply. He cagily wrote Bell:

> In order to reduce the expenditure of the party, I am requested to issue orders for the return of Lungshar. This suggestion has been made for the benefit of Tibet. But Lungshar has been especially deputed to look after the students and at the same time to convey presents and thanks to the great British Emperor for the kindness shown to me and my party while we were in India. Therefore, if he can obtain an interview with His Majesty, the foreign Powers will just know that the British and Tibetans are friendly. Moreover, as Lungshar has learnt medicine from his boyhood,

27. IOR, L/PS/10/400, letter from B. Gould to the under-secretary of state for India, London, dated 14 May 1913.
28. IOR, L/PS/10/400, translation of a letter from Sir Charles Bell, political officer in Sikkim, to the Dalai Lama, dated 13 May 1913.

it will benefit him to see and learn the ways and customs of London so as to prove himself of great use to Tibet in every way. If he is recalled now, as if from the way, the Foreign Powers and the Chinese will assume that the British Government are not well-disposed towards Tibet and that will injure us. The students also will feel aggrieved if no one is kept to look after them. The parents of the students will also be aggrieved if Lungshar is now recalled. Therefore kindly move the Government to grant him an audience in London.[29]

During his stay in England, Lungshar learned a moderate amount of basic English and a great deal about "democratic" political institutions and the way they had replaced hereditary monarchical institutions during the "age of revolution."[30] His son, Lhalu, recalls that his father would often tell stories about the fall of the kings of France and Italy and their brutal executions. Lungshar was also deeply impressed by the way the British monarchy had avoided such violent revolution by accepting a constitutional monarchy. During his stay in England he became convinced that Tibet must change voluntarily or experience the fate of France.[31]

Lungshar's independence worried the British Foreign Office so much that Scotland Yard placed him under surveillance. However, this turned up only a few insignificant foreign contacts—visits by several Japanese and Chinese persons and by a young Indian undergraduate named Mukandi Lal of Hertford College, Oxford, who was described by Scotland Yard as "a man inclined to hold advanced views."[32]

Lungshar's behavior during this period provides valuable insight into his character. He was proud, somewhat arrogant, sure of himself, not afraid to go his own way, and willing to fight to achieve his goals. Though still a young man, Lungshar was not awed by England or the British and would not let them determine and control what he perceived to be the interests of the Tibetan government.

British records confirm that Lungshar visited France, Germany,

29. IOR, L/PS/10/400, letter from the Dalai Lama to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 30 May 1913.

30. Later, in Tibet, he and his wife spoke English when they did not want the children or servants to know what they were saying (Lungshar Chanjula, interview).

31. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 93.

32. IOR, L/PS/18/B210.

Switzerland, Italy, Holland, and Belgium before returning home in September 1914.[33] His son says that this was ordered by the Dalai Lama, who wanted to develop ties with other countries in case he later had difficulties with England and China.

In September 1914, Lungshar suddenly told the British that he had to return to India immediately. Lungshar's wife had become pregnant, and both she and Lungshar appear to have misunderstood someone's comment, that if her child was born in England it would be English, to mean that the child would look like an Englishman. The thought of a blond, blue-eyed child terrified Lungshar's wife, and she convinced Lungshar to set off for India immediately so that the child could be born in the Tibetan areas of Kalimpong and Darjeeling. They left in September 1914. The child grew up to become the Shape Lhalu who figured prominently in the Reting rebellion of 1947.[34]

Lungshar returned to Tibet during the period when the Dalai Lama was strengthening and modernizing the military and other state institutions. He was appointed to the important position of tsipön and took the lead in generating revenue by confiscating estates that lacked proper documentation of ownership and by forcing the great aristocratic and monastic landlords to pay increased taxes. His unpopularity among the elite is illustrated by a dilemma that F. W. Williamson encountered on a visit to Lhasa. Lungshar had invited Williamson to his house, and the latter wanted to reciprocate. It was customary to invite several officials of roughly the same government rank, but Williamson was advised by his staff that the other high-ranking officials disliked Lungshar. Williamson was forced to invite Lungshar and his family by themselves.[35]

Lungshar reached the pinnacle of his power during 1925–1931, following the Dalai Lama's disenchantment with Tsarong and the military commanders. The Dalai Lama consulted him on virtually all government affairs, and at ceremonies a separate tent was set up so that he could read and answer messages from the Dalai Lama in privacy. In

33. IOR, L/PS/20/D220, *Who's Who in Tibet* 1938: 44.

34. Lhalu, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Lungshar Chanjula, interview.

35. This may have been an overreaction on Williamson's part, but it should be noted that he was advised at this time by the very shrewd and knowledgeable Rai Bahadur Norbhu Döndup, who should have known the internal situation in Lhasa.

April 1929, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the military in addition to his position as tsipön.[36]

Lungshar increased the army by about 2,200 soldiers and built new regimental headquarters for these troops. He increased the pay and rations of the police and soldiers, both of which had fallen into disarray following the demotion of Tsarong in 1925,[37] and he procured equipment of all types for them, including snow goggles, tents, and stoves. Further, he dressed them in Tibetan rather than British uniforms.

But Lungshar's intelligence, energy and capability were undermined by his arrogance, which led to a number of incidents that gradually prompted the 13th Dalai Lama to view him as a threat, just as he had Tsarong. The most famous of these incidents occurred in 1928–29. In November 1926, Tibet had passed a rule forbidding the import and use of tobacco. Consequently, the Nepalese commissioner in Lhasa forbade tobacco trade and the Tibetan government bought up the inventories of Nepalese traders. A black market developed; this irritated the Tibetan government, but little was done until the 1928 arrest of Gyebo Sherpa, a rich trader in Lhasa, for selling cigarettes. The Nepalese commissioner protested that Gyebo Sherpa was Nepalese and therefore subject to Nepalese extraterritoriality, but the Tibetan government ignored this protest. In September 1929, Gyebo Sherpa escaped from prison and took haven in the Nepalese mission. Lungshar, then the commander-in-chief of the army, ordered him forcibly removed, severely flogged,[38] and then returned to prison in the Potala Palace, where he died from his wounds after two days.[39]

The Nepalese demanded an apology from the Tibetan government and insisted that the guilty officers be punished. The Dalai Lama, undoubtedly in response to Lungshar's arguments, refused. The Nepalese

36. IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 15 April 1929. Lungshar's official title appears to have been *magji tshondzin* or "guardian" of the commander-in-chief. Since there was no commander-in-chief, he assumed that position (Sambo [Rimshi], interview; Shakabpa, interview).

37. IOR, L/PS/12/4175 (PZ 1340), letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 6 January 1934.

38. This was the *corca* ("arrival") whipping (Shan kha ba [Shankawa] ms.).

39. IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/214a, letter from Norbhu Döndup to Major F. M. Bailey, dated 18 October 1929.



21.

(Left to right) Trimön Shape and Tsarong Dzasa and wife (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

threatened war, and Tibet sent troops to face the expected attack,[40] which was averted only when the British mediated in 1930. Soon after this, in 1931, Lungshar was stripped of his position as commander-in-chief, although he retained the position of tsipön until the death of the Dalai Lama in 1933.[41]

A fourth powerful figure was the fifty-seven-year old Trimön Shape (see Figure 21). He had been a tsipön in 1910, and with Chamba Tendar had organized the Lhasa-based resistance to the Chinese. When Tsarong returned to Lhasa in early 1912, Trimön and Tsarong joined

40. Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms.

41. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, Norbhu Döndup's report that this is "on good authority" is cited in a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 13 May 1932.

to pave the way for the Dalai Lama's triumphant return in 1913. Trimön attended the Simla Convention as the Lönchen Shatra's assistant, and soon after this was appointed first shape and then governor-general of Eastern Tibet. Because he did not get along well with Lungshar or Kumbela, he exerted no influence in the later years of the Dalai Lama's reign. In fact, on several occasions Lungshar complained to the Dalai Lama about Trimön's work and behavior and suggested that Trimön should be demoted. However, after the Dalai Lama's death, Trimön became the dominant figure in the Kashag, restoring its status during the early part of the interregnum period.[42]

Some mention should probably also be made of Tsarong Dzasa, the former commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army (see Figure 21). Along with Kumbela and Lungshar, he was the third major favorite of the 13th Dalai Lama during the 1912–1933 period. As was noted in Chapter Four, he had been demoted from his position of commander-in-chief in 1925 and then from the position of shape in 1930. After the demotion in 1925, he devoted most of his energies to his own wealth and to his work at the Trapchi complex. In the summer of 1933 he began a one-year sabbatical from the government, and he was living on his estate when the Dalai Lama died. He did not return to Lhasa until the end of May 1934, and he played no part in any of the ensuing machinations.

The death of the 13th Dalai Lama, then, immediately raised the issue of who was to head Tibet during the next two decades. While lamas prayed and religious mourning activities abounded, the start of the eleventh month of the Water-Bird year also saw the beginning of a monumental five-month power struggle that shook the existing structure and ended in the mutilation and imprisonment of one prominent figure and the banishment of many others.

KUMBELA AFTER THE DALAI LAMA'S DEATH

Because Kumbela had no official government position, the death of the Dalai Lama left him with undefined status. On the very evening

42. The other two shapes in December 1933 were the monk-shape Chödar and Langcunga Shape.

that the Dalai Lama died, Kumbela met with the Lönchen Langdün and the Kashag and offered them the keys to the Dalai Lama's quarters, saying that he had served the Dalai Lama to the best of his ability, but he was uneducated and planned to retire from government service to a monastery. Although Langdün and the shapes had been precisely the ones whose authority Kumbela had previously bypassed, they did not want to identify themselves as his enemies by accepting the keys. Kumbela appeared to have military backing,[43] and since they had to assume that Kumbela was not going to fade away quietly, they feared retaliation if Kumbela later came to power. They therefore urged Kumbela not to retire and specially entrusted him with the completion of the construction of the Dalai Lama's tomb. Langdün, who appears to have genuinely decided to ally himself with Kumbela, the next day invited him to have lunch and asked his advice on what the next step should be.[44]

During the next weeks Kumbela continued to carry on as usual[45] and was present whenever important decisions were made by the Lönchen Langdün and the Kashag.[46] Moreover, it was Kumbela who first informed the British of the Dalai Lama's death, six days afterward, when he sent them the following telegram:

> His Holiness Dalai Lama after a short illness took apparent temporary departure from this world at six-thirty p.m. Seventeenth stop please excuse delay in wiring caused by the immensity of the shock stop government being carried on as before hope to receive assurance of continuance of your friendship at this sad conjuncture.
>
> Kunbila Personal Attendant[47]

At Kumbela's suggestion, Langdün issued an order that all government officials and abbots of the Three Seats should come to the Jensey Palace in Norbulinga on the fourth day of the eleventh month to pay

43. Surkhang ms.
44. Surkhang 1968; Shan kha ba ([Shankawa] ms.) wrote that Kumbela handed over the keys to the Trunyichemmo Dombo, who then asked the shapes what to do and was told to give them back to Kumbela. Shankawa commented that thereafter Kumbela was seen proudly discussing affairs with Langdün.
45. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, letter from the Gyantse trade agent to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 6 January 1934.
46. Surkhang ms.
47. IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/291, telegram from Kumbela to F. M. Bailey, the political officer in Sikkim, dated 23 December 1933.

their last respects to the body of the Dalai Lama. Following this, a National Assembly was convened to discuss the political arrangements during the interregnum.[48] Surkhang says that Kumbela also arranged through Langdün to have all Lhasa-based troops come to that palace on the fourth to "present arms" to the late Dalai Lama. Since the largest single unit in Lhasa at that time was the Trongdra Regiment (which had roughly 750 soldiers),[49] this was a very shrewd move on Kumbela's part to impress and intimidate the other government and monastic officials. Surkhang suggests that had he made a move to take over the government at this time, he would have had no opposition.[50]

Kumbela did not make such an attempt, presumably because he felt confident that with the support of Langdün as well as the backing of a number of government officials, the assembly would continue his position in some form. Moreover, he was still in control of the Trongdra Regiment.

The National Assembly met on the fourth.[51] Lay officials Chalu and Kapshöba argued strongly that one person (meaning Kumbela) was experienced and had been trusted by the 13th Dalai Lama and that everyone knew what that trusted person had done.[52] Therefore, they said, it was not necessary to search for a new person to take charge.[53]

The ensuing debate was heated. Some suggested that a Council of Regents should be created, to consist of the lönchen plus two new officials, one a layman and the other a monk.[54] Still others said that there should be an incarnate lama as in the past.[55] A strong supporter of Lungshar, the lay aristocrat Canglocen (Sonam Gyebo), responded

48. Ibid.

49. Surkhang ms. The next largest unit was the Bodyguard Regiment with 500 troops, and then the 300 or so soldiers of the Tadang Regiment, which had just returned from duty in Eastern Tibet.

50. Ibid.

51. The type of National Assembly convened that day was the Large Abbreviated Assembly (*Tshongdu hragdu gyeypa*). It consisted of the current abbots of the Three Seats, the former abbots (*khensur*), officials selected by the Kashag, Tsigang, and Yigtsang from all government ranks, and the eight trungtsi, that is, the four trunyichemmo and the four tsipöns acting together as a committee. The Large Abbreviated Assembly usually consisted of about 50 to 75 persons.

52. Kapshöba denied that he supported Kumbela, but this is so widely articulated that his denial must be rejected.

53. Anon1, interview.

54. Ibid.

55. Sle zur, 1984: 3–4; Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms.

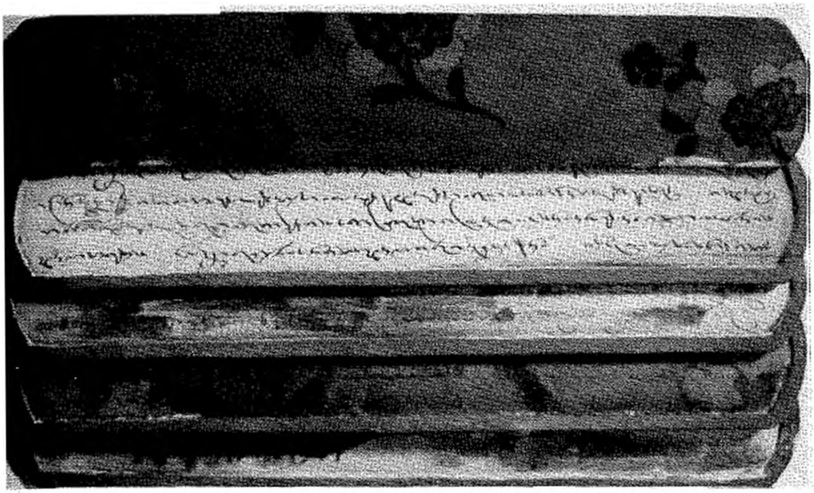
that when you put a lama on the throne you are in reality putting his manager in power, and these managers are nothing more than ignorant old monks who sit beneath the throne leisurely taking snuff and making decisions. He insisted that it was government officials who should run the government, not managers of lamas; therefore, he concluded, two lönchens should be added, one monk official and one lay official.[56] Others suggested having the lönchens rule the country together with the Kashag; still others felt that the assembly should not concentrate on such issues but instead should focus on performing the ritual prayers and the last rites for the late Dalai Lama. It was finally decided to form small committees to draft written recommendations. Most of these committees wanted an incarnate lama as regent, but the fourth-rank lay officials recommended Kumbela. The meeting adjourned without consensus. Those seeking power would have to create agreement.

A few days after this, on approximately the seventh day of the eleventh month, several strong Kumbela supporters, including Pandatsang and Sandutsang, sent Kumbela a message urging him to make a move. Kumbela erased their message from its chalked writing slate (see Figure 22) and sent back the empty slate.[57] Whether out of overconfidence or ambivalence, Kumbela did not act to consolidate his position and simply continued his normal routine, working to construct the Dalai Lama's tomb.

Lungshar, however, did act. The National Assembly could decide virtually anything with regard to the leadership of the interregnum period. It was dominated by the abbots and ex-abbots of the three great Gelugpa monasteries. Lungshar would therefore have to gain the support of the monks as well as to neutralize Kumbela if he were to win the regency. Since the monks were the most conservative element in Tibet, the assembly was a far from likely avenue for Lungshar to use to catapult himself into power and reform and strengthen the central government. Nevertheless, he developed a brilliant scheme to do just that—and nearly succeeded.

Lungshar had the strong backing of a number of key figures in the Three Seats, in particular in Sera and Drepung. In Sera Mey college he

56. Sle zur, 1984: 4; Lhalu, interview; Canglocen Wanam, interview.
57. Surkhang 1968.



22.

Samdra writing slate

had Tigica and Chamön Depa, and in Drepung's Gomang college he had Saw Depa Könchok.[58] Lungshar also elicited support from other monk and lay officials such as the Drönyerchemmo, Tenzin Chömpel, Gacan Demba, Kongtru (Thubten Genden), Gyekar Nangba, and Kitöpa. The influential monk official Temba Jayan was also aligned with Lungshar.[59]

Lungshar's plan to eliminate Kumbela was ingeniously simple: he sent his monastic supporters to their respective monasteries to mount a propaganda campaign indirectly accusing Kumbela of foul play in the death of the Dalai Lama. They raised pointed questions such as "How could the Dalai Lama have died so suddenly? On the twenty-fourth he was well and on the thirtieth he is dead, yet no one told us he was

58. Chamön Depa was a former monastic administrative official who was both very rich and very popular with the Sera monks. He was one of the monk representatives taken by Shatra to the Simla Conference in 1913 and was a key shaper of monastic opinion in Sera. Saw Depa, like Chamon Depa, was a former monastic administrator. Although he had married, he was wealthy and very popular in Drepung and had also been one of the monastic representatives at the Simla Conference. Tigica was another popular former monastery official.

59. Surkhang 1968: Lhalu, interview.

seriously ill. This is very strange and suspicious. We must know exactly what happened and who is to blame for the loss of our beloved Dalai Lama."[60] The monks accepted the possibility of criminal actions with alacrity and, as planned, held informal meetings at which they demanded that the National Assembly be convened to discuss this issue.

The abbots were stunned by the implication of these charges and tried to pacify the monks by promising they would look into the matter. Normally the abbots and disciplinary chiefs had total control over the behavior of the monks, but in situations like this in which the monks became highly aroused over an issue, the monastic leadership risked the loss of their own following and standing in the monastery if they failed to support the monks. In the Sera Che rebellion of 1947, for example, the monks murdered their own abbot when it appeared that he was siding with the government. The leadership in Sera and Drepung, together with about fifteen representatives selected from the various colleges, drafted a resolution to present to the government. As its first point, it stated that the construction of the golden tomb of the late Dalai Lama should not be haphazard but should follow tradition and religious texts. Since Kumbela had already started work on the tomb, this was a clear attack on him and a not very subtle aspersion on his erudition and knowledge. Second, it stated that no one had known of the Dalai Lama's sickness until he was at the point of death, so the Tibetan people wanted proof that the Dalai Lama had died of natural causes. Among the questions to be examined were: Who was the doctor? What medicines were given? When was this done? Third, it stated that a lama should be selected as regent, as has been the custom in the past. This was not advocated by Lungshar, but was one difficulty he had to overcome in using the monks as his source of power. Fourth, it called for the convening of a National Assembly to settle these issues as quickly as possible, but demanded the inclusion of extra delegates from the monasteries. The additional delegates were a critical part of the Lungshar plan: they would allow him to stack the assembly with supporters like Saw Depa Könchok and Chamön Depa.[61]

On the tenth or eleventh of the eleventh month (roughly 22 January

60. Anon1, interview.
61. Ibid.

1934) a large delegation of abbots and monk representatives took this resolution to the Kashag, which immediately took it to the Lönchen Langdün. Whatever their personal feelings on the matter, the shapes and the lönchen agreed almost at once to all the points, including the extra monastic representatives in the assembly. The first part of Lungshar's plan, therefore, had gone smoothly, while he had appeared to have had nothing to do with it.

To avoid tipping their hand by immediately calling Kumbela to testify, Lungshar's supporters asked the assembly first to call such witnesses as the Drönyerchemmo and the Chigyab Khembo. These individuals testified that their job basically was to accompany the Dalai Lama at ceremonies and that the real day-to-day work was done by the Dalai Lama's favorites. The assembly then called the favorites, starting with the nonpolitical Namtröla and Gendenla. They both testified that they were with the Dalai Lama only at mealtimes when they served him and that it was Kumbela who was there all the time and was in charge.

At this point Kumbela was called to testify. He began by saying that in the Water-Monkey year (1932) the Dalai Lama had already stated in his "Last Testament" that he did not have many years to carry out his duties, that is, that he himself had said he would die soon, so it was less than surprising that he had in fact died. Regarding the circumstances surrounding the Dalai Lama's death, Kumbela claimed that the illness was at first assumed to be routine, since the Dalai Lama was prone to colds. Despite a slight worsening of the Dalai Lama's illness after the ceremony of the twenty-fourth, those close to him felt that nothing was unusually wrong.[62] Kumbela, however, also insisted that he had wanted to inform the Kashag but that the Dalai Lama had refused to permit this, telling him that the officials would make a big fuss over it and so would harm his luck.[63] When the Dalai Lama's condition did not improve after a few days of rest, Kumbela said, he then notified the appropriate officials. After this questioning, Kumbela was sent home.

When the assembly convened the next day, its meeting was interrupted by an extraordinary event: the sudden mutiny of Kumbela's crack Trongdra Regiment.

62. Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms.
63. Lha 'dzoms sgrol dkar 1984: 142–43.

THE MUTINY OF THE TRONGDRA REGIMENT

Lungshar realized that to eliminate Kumbela he would have to neutralize the Trongdra Regiment. Its inherent weakness was that its "middle class" members were dissatisfied; they did not want to be soldiers, nor did they need to be for economic survival. To conceal his role, Lungshar sent Gacan Demba, a commoner who had been ennobled by the Dalai Lama, to persuade key noncommissioned officers to incite the troops to desert. His argument was straightforward and effective: it was unjust of Kumbela to force them to spend their lives in the army. Now that the Dalai Lama was dead they had a unique opportunity to alter their fate. He also insinuated that there was important support for this action within the government. The soldiers were receptive, and on a Saturday, their day off, they staged a mass walkout to petition the Kashag to allow them to go home for good.[64]

Taring, the junior commander of the regiment, remembers that he was alone on that Saturday because Yuthok, the regiment's senior commander, had left for home the day before. The regiment's soldiers normally went to Lhasa on their day off, but on that day they first went to one of the nearby open fields and held what appeared to him to be a meeting. Taring also noticed troops leaving the garrison carrying suspiciously heavy loads on their heads. He went out and asked these soldiers where they were going. When they refused to answer clearly, he inspected their loads and found them filled with cooking utensils and other useful objects. He immediately surmised that a desertion or mutiny of sorts was in progress and placed these troops under arrest. However, with only a few noncommissioned officers present, Taring was reluctant to try to force the mass of soldiers to return. He instead went to inform Yuthok and then the Kashag, which was meeting at Norbulinga.[65]

By the time Yuthok and Taring reached the gates of the Norbulinga Palace grounds, they found the area filled with their troops, who forced the commanders to push their way through the milling mob. When

64. This account derives primarily from J. Taring, interview.
65. Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms. In the meantime, one of the regiment's rupöns, Ngabö (Ngawang Jigme), had already reported the apparent desertion.

they finally reached the Kashag's quarters, the commanders discovered that the soldiers had already presented their petition.

The assembly was in session when word reached them of the walk-out. Lungshar's followers, Tigica and Saw Depa Könchok, implied that it was another tactic of Kumbela's. They pointed out that the Trapchi Office, with all Tibet's guns and gold, was in danger, and they strongly recommended that monk guards from nearby Sera monastery be sent at once to protect the complex from looters. Although several officials such as Lukhang and the Trunyichemmo Dombo argued against this, the majority agreed to recommend to the Kashag that monk guards be posted in Trapchi.[66] Had the Kashag accepted the recommendation, the complex would have fallen under the direct control of the monks who were allied with Lungshar.

This did not happen, however. Instead, after listening to Trimön's persuasive argument that there was still a functioning government and that consequently monk guards were unnecessary, the Kashag, without informing the assembly, ordered the Trongdra Regiment commanders and 250 soldiers from the Bodyguard Regiment to protect the Trapchi complex. Two officials who were subordinate to Kumbela at the arsenal were ordered to give to this contingent Tibet's four machine guns as well as all other weapons and ammunition stored in the arsenal. The machine guns were to be set up on the roof of the garrison to defend it from all directions.[67] The Kashag ordered the rifle bolts of the other stored weapons removed and kept in Shöl separately from the rifles.[68] They further ordered that none of the troops who had mutinied should be permitted to return to the garrison for any reason. Taring and Yuthok were ordered to shoot the renegade soldiers if they tried to force their way back. Taring remembered clearly that it was Trimön who gave him this order.[69] Only after these orders were given did the Kashag

66. Anon1, interview; J. Taring, interview.
67. J. Taring, interview.
68. Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms.
69. J. Taring interview. Shan kha ba ([Shankawa] ms.), then a commander of the Tatang Regiment, wrote that Kumbela was at a meeting with the Kashag at the time of the mutiny and that the shapes ordered him (Shankawa) to return to Trapchi and post machine guns on the roof of the garrison to protect it. Shankawa replied that he had no soldiers ready to go. Then someone suggested sending 100 Bodyguard Regiment troops, but the Bodyguard commander argued that he needed all his troops to defend the palaces.

inform the assembly that there was no need for monk guards since troops from the Bodyguard Regiment had already been dispatched to defend the Trapchi complex.

The Kashag's outwitting of the Lungshar clique, however, was no consolation to Kumbela, whose power base was now destroyed. Had he "created" a national crisis and then moved to "save" the nation with the Trongdra Regiment, Kumbela could very likely have assumed power. Instead, he trusted to his experience and past association with the Dalai Lama, leaving the Trongdra Regiment unused in the background, glittering from a distance but flawed within.[70]

While the mutiny and dissolution of the Trongdra Regiment marked a major personal victory for Lungshar, it also marked the reemergence of the Kashag as a force to be reckoned with. In particular, it brought Lungshar and a new and able rival, Trimön, into a confrontation that would extend over the next five months and end with the destruction of Lungshar and his clique.

KUMBELA'S ARREST

The desertion of the Trongdra regiment set the stage for the fall of Kumbela. When the assembly met on the next day, many of the monk delegates insisted that Kumbela's testimony did not seem reasonable and called him to testify again.[71]

Shankawa says that finally the Trongdra troops were ordered to return and guard the valuables until the matter of their release was settled. This is disputed by Taring, who says that Bodyguard Regiment troops were sent.

70. After the Trongdra troops were refused reentry to Trapchi, they pitched tents in park areas in Lhasa and waited for the decision of the Kashag on their petition to go home. Although many would have liked to return to the regiment to pick up their personal possessions, and a few undoubtedly even to remain as soldiers (some never understood what was happening and simply followed the mob), they could not do so. The Kashag did not issue a decision for seven or eight days, during which time many of the soldiers, having no food allotment or salary, had to beg for food. In the end, the Kashag decreed that 750 of the regiment's 1,000 soldiers could go home, while 250 were to remain in the regiment. Yuthog requested and eventually received a transfer to the Bodyguard Regiment, while Taring continued to command the 250 Trongdra troops. But they were never again a fighting force. In fact, Taring says that since they had no military duties, he had the soldiers dig wells, for this area around the barracks was notoriously short of water. Later, even these 250 were sent home and the regiment was permanently disbanded. (J. Taring, interview.)

71. Surkhang 1968.

On this occasion the assembly treated Kumbela rudely. It did not invite him to sit but, rather, ordered him to kneel while being questioned. It also did not accept his testimony that the Dalai Lama had refused to permit him to inform the Kashag. Several monastic delegates said that the handling of the Dalai Lama's illness had been appalling in that there had been no warning about the illness, and thus no time to make the appropriate prayers. A blistering attack by Lungshar's supporter Gacan Demba said, in effect, "If someone murders someone these days, should we not whip him? If we do not punish the murderer of the Dalai Lama then what is right?" Others, such as the lay official Lukhang, took Kumbela's side, pointing out that "Until now the Tibetan people have only heard about the death of the Dalai Lama, not his murder. Since you are saying he was murdered, then it is your responsibility to present evidence supporting your contention."[72] In the end Kumbela was arrested and confined in the Potala's famous Sharcenchog prison until a verdict and sentence were rendered.

As he was being taken to the prison that night, Kumbela stopped to pray and prostrate before an altar of the Gombo deity in Norbulinga. There seemed nothing unusual about this at the time, but later that night the Drönyerchemmo Tenzin Chömpel died. A supporter of Lungshar who had spoken against Kumbela that day, he was having a small party for some friends and was bragging a bit about the fall of Kumbela when, without warning, he clutched at his chest, vomited, and fell over dead. When his body was cut up at the funeral it was said that his heart had shriveled up. The belief that the deity had answered Kumbela's prayer made many people reluctant to demand the harshest penalty for him.[73]

That same day, Kumbela's father, Tashi, was arrested and placed in the Nangtseshar prison, and the property of many of Kumbela's relatives was confiscated. Others involved with the death of the Dalai Lama, such as the Jensey Tashi Döndrup, Gegen Lama, and Dr. Chambala, were arrested and placed in the Shöl prison.

In the ensuing days, there was talk of severe mutilation punishments and even of arresting Pandatsang, one of Kumbela's strongest supporters. Other officials, such as Tregang, who were closely associated with

72. Surkhang ms.
73. Ibid.

Kumbela did not venture to go to their offices, and wall posters (*yig-gyur*) were hung accusing those officials who had argued against punishing Kumbela of taking bribes from him. In the end, however, the majority in the Assembly felt that it would be inappropriate to charge Kumbela with the murder of the Dalai Lama, whom he had served so faithfully, and so convicted him only of failing to deliver prompt notification about the illness. Kumbela was exiled for life to Tselagang District in Kongpo under the supervision of the Chamnag monastery; all his property and that of his relatives (which was assumed to have come from him) was confiscated. The others involved received similar sentences. Kumbela's father was sent back to Nyemo to serve again as a taxpayer serf, the Dalai Lama's personal physician was exiled to Gyatso District in Takpo (Southern Tibet), and the other favorite, Tashi Döndrup, was sent to the Ganden Rapten monastery in the Gunam District of Takpo. The medium of the Nechung oracle was not exiled (since in the Tibetan belief system it was the oracle, not the medium, who gave the medicine) but was relieved of his position and placed in the custody of Gomang college in Drepung monastery.[74]

The banishments were arranged for the most inauspicious day in the Tibetan calender, the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month, when all the evil spirits of the year were exorcised and driven out of Lhasa. Kumbela's route on that day was planned to go through the main Lhasa market area (the Barkor) (see Map 3) and directly under the window of a house called Kyitöpa. Kumbela's father was also brought to this point, but from the opposite direction. Thus father and son passed each other precisely at the Kyitöpa house but were not permitted to speak to each other; neither knew where the other was going. Lungshar watched from the upstairs window of the house, which was owned by his common-law wife, Lhalu.

At this time two satiric street songs were sung in Lhasa about Kumbela's fall.

> Kucar [Kumbela] is in Sharcenchog [prison]
> meditating,
> [His] car is in Norbulinga
> eating grass.

74. Surkhang 1968; Lha 'dzoms sgrol dkar 1984: 144.

That powerful person, conqueror of all places,
in the British car,
That favorite who is a son of the gods,
please tell me where he has gone?[75]

But there was also sympathy for Kumbela, as is shown by the following undated personal letter from Taring, the commander of the Trongdra Regiment: "I also feel very sorry for Kunphela [Kumbela] who has shown so much progress in his work when the Dalai Lama was alive and now as soon as he is not in sight, the monk officials and the chief monks of the monasteries are trying to withdraw his power at once but the majority of the officials are on Kunphela's side."[76] Shankawa relates that when Kumbela was being taken through the streets of Lhasa in disgrace on the twenty-ninth, many had tears in their eyes, remembering the face of his patron, the late Dalai Lama.[77]

Thus, the first act of the political drama following the death of the 13th Dalai Lama ended in victory for Lungshar. It did not, however, settle the political configuration of the interregnum period, for Kumbela's fall did not guarantee that Lungshar would achieve a position of power and authority. The events and consequences of Lungshar's major power move will be examined in Chapter 6.

THE PANDATSANG REBELLION

Lhasa was rocked with the news of an attempted rebellion involving the Pandatsang family, a month after the traumatic events of the Kumbela affair and in part as an outgrowth of it. Pandatsang was a wealthy and powerful trading family from the Markham area in Eastern Tibet (see Map 5), who had set up a Lhasa base during the early part of the reign of the late Dalai Lama. At the time of his death, they were sole

75. In Tibetan: *sku bcar shar chen lcogs la / sku mtshams bsdams nas bzhugs shag / mo tor nor bu gling khar / rtsa kha bzas nas bsdad shag. 'bi la mo ta'i nang gi / mi dbang khams gsum dbang 'dud / sku bcar lha yi sras po / gar song shod rogs gnang dang.*

76. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, copy of undated and unsigned private letter on Tsarong House stationery to the political officer in Sikkim, enclosed with a letter from the political officer to the Government of India, dated 15 January 1934.

77. Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms.

agents for the Tibetan government in the very lucrative international wool trade. Nyima, the head of the family, was a favorite of the 13th Dalai Lama and had been sent by him on a number of unofficial missions.[78]

Nyima's younger half-brother, Tobgye, had been given the rank of a captain and placed in command of a border security force in his home area. He was serving there at the time the Dalai Lama died. The Pandatsang family had been close to Kumbela, so when news reached Markham that Kumbela had been arrested and put in prison, Tobgye was bitter and angry. The Lhasa news also said that Yambe, Tobgye's elder brother, was in danger of being arrested also. Apparently the mention of Pandatsang in the National Assembly debates on Kumbela had reached Eastern Tibet in a garbled version.

Instead of sending a messenger to Lhasa to ascertain the situation, Tobgye invited monks to undertake a week of prayers followed by a "divine lottery divination" (*senriy*) to determine whether his brother was in trouble.[79] The answer from the divination was affirmative and Tobgye, after some deliberation, rebelled against the Tibetan government.

The rebellion exemplifies the "eye for an eye" ethic that Khambas held so strongly; but it also reflects the Khambas' antagonism to the central government, which dated back to the expulsion of the Chinese from Kham in 1913–1919. At that time the Tibetan officials were welcomed as liberators, but they treated the Khambas, whom they considered uncouth and ignorant, with disdain and regarded their stay in Kham as an opportunity to get rich by exploiting the free transportation corvée labor.

As early as 1924, F. M. Bailey, the British political officer in Sikkim, had noted this:

78. The Lhasa firm was started by Nyima's father, Nyican, who had been murdered a few years earlier, apparently for personal reasons, while attending a picnic.

79. The *senriy* divine lottery operated as follows. Slips of paper bearing answers (e.g., "my brother is in danger" and "my brother is not in danger") or names of candidates were rolled into barley dough balls of identical size and weight. These were placed on a plate and, after prayers, rolled before a deity until one of the dough balls fell off the plate. The name or answer in that dough ball was considered to have been chosen by the deity.

> While trying to make friends with China they [the Tibetans] should make their army efficient by education and other means. They should organize finance and most of all and easiest treat the people near the Chinese frontier well. In this way the people would prefer Tibetan rule and this would be worth 10,000 men to them. I [Bailey] said I heard from General Pereira that in some places the people preferred Chinese rule as ula [forced corvée transport and work levies] was very heavy and not paid for by [Lhasa] Tibetans.[80]

Pandatsang Tobgye, in fact, felt that Central Tibetan officials would never treat Khambas fairly and had for some time been advocating self-government among the local leaders.[81] The Kumbela affair brought Tobgye to the breaking point and he concluded that the time was ripe for a rebellion. Apparently he believed that the monks of the Three Seats, a majority of whom were Khambas, would pressure the government to legitimize his action.

Tobgye and his Eastern Tibetan troops launched their attack on one of the government's regimental headquarters. Acting at night, they captured it easily, killed several soldiers, and made a prisoner of the monk-official Thubten Sangbo (Tsatora Khencung), who headed the Upper Salt Office. Nornang, the regiment's army commander, was away making religious offerings for the late Dalai Lama and so avoided capture, but Tobgye's forces took all the regiment's guns and cannons as well as Nornang's private property.[82]

Tobgye and his supporters disseminated their views intensively in the Markham area, both in person and in pamphlets. According to one interview, these pamphlets contained the following appeal (in paraphrase):

> It is a cruel act to punish Kumbela immediately after the death of the late Dalai Lama. Kumbela had served the late Dalai Lama to the best of his

80. IOR, Mss.Eur. F. 157/214a, notation of conversation with Lönchen Sholkang in the diary of Major Bailey, dated 28 July 1924. Kham was also noted for its violent feuding.

81. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. His first wife was Tobgye's daughter.

82. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, report of Norbhu Döndup cited in letter of the political officer in Sikkim to the foreign secretary of the government of India, dated 14 July 1934; ibid., letter from the Kashag to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 26 June 1934. Norbhu Döndup states that Tobgye captured 3 mountain guns and 500 to 700 rifles.

ability and the late Dalai Lama had relied on him. This is a clear example of mismanagement by the Central Government. Not only was Kumbela disgraced, but he was imprisoned and exiled. This shows how unjust the Central Government is. When officials of the Central Government come to Kham they treat Khambas with contempt. They lash them saying that "Khambas have their ears in their ass," i.e., that they respond only to physical punishment. Therefore we cannot place our hopes in such a government so we appeal to all Khambas to join together and take control of our own territory.[83]

Although many Khambas were sympathetic to his cause, most ignored Pandatsang Tobgye's appeal and a general rebellion never developed. Trentong, the governor-general of Kham (in Chamdo), informed Lhasa of the revolt in March 1934 and ordered commanders Shekarlingpa and Ringang to attack Tobgye's forces.[84] Under threat of attack by a large Tibetan government force, Tobgye fled to Batang and Po in Chinese-controlled Kham (east of the Yangtse River), taking his troops and spoils with him.

When this news reached Lhasa the government ordered Tobgye's brother Yambe arrested, his house in Lhasa sealed, and the matter investigated.[85] The Kashag also wrote to the British political officer in Sikkim requesting India to freeze the Pandatsang family's assets in India:

Recently we received a report from acting Shape Tendong-nga, Commissioner of eastern Tibet, to the effect that Pu Tobgye of Panda Tsang has rebelled against the Tibetan government and has taken aggressive measures. It is certain that the whole family of Panda Tsang is concerned in the matter. You, excellent Lönchen, are aware how kind the Tibetan government has been to them. They have committed themselves very seriously. It has not been found possible to leave matters as they are. The Tibetan Government have taken charge of men and property in Lhasa. They have been running the trade of the Tibetan Government and they

83. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
84. Khe smad ([Kheme] 1982; 41) suggests that both of these officials were related to the Pandatsang family and avoided finding Tobgye's force.
85. *Sealing* refers to the Tibetan government's practice of temporarily confiscating the personal property of people it arrests by placing seals on the doors of their house (and internal storerooms). Such property was returned if the investigation showed the person to be innocent.

have big accounts to render to them on this account. They have accumulated the bulk of their money and property at Kalimpong [and] we would therefore request that you, excellent Lönchen, will very kindly request the great British Government to issue orders to the British police at Kalimpong to take charge of men and property at Kalimpong, so that money and property may not go astray. We would also request all possible help in the matter from yourself. Kindly favour us with an early reply.

Usual Ending
Seal of Kashag[86]

As the Tibetan officials and police approached Yambe's house to seal it and arrest him, a servant noticed them and warned Yambe, who immediately ordered his gate locked, even though he did not know the reason for their visit. In Tibet, once a house and property are sealed, the owner has virtually no leverage to obtain a negotiated compromise, so Yambe's act, though extremely defiant, was shrewd. The officials shouted that they were ordered to seal the house pending an investigation because Yambe's brother Tobgye had rebelled in Kham. Pandatsang shouted back that he had no knowledge of what had taken place in Eastern Tibet and was in no way implicated in it; the matter could be easily settled, he said, without sealing the property. The government officials replied that they had to carry out their orders; they began to erect ladders in order to gain entry by scaling the walls around the house.

The Pandatsang family then decided to use their large store of rifles and pistols to break out of the siege before the government could bring in reinforcements. Their twenty or thirty servants and retainers were armed and told to saddle the horses. Just at this point, some of the police reached the top of the wall and one of Pandatsang's men fired a

86. IOR, L/PS/12/4182, letter from the Kashag to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 25 March 1934 (tenth day of the second month of the Wood-Dog year). Freezing such funds was not possible, and the political officer in Sikkim sent Norbhu Döndup to Lhasa with instructions "to inform the Tibetan Government of the legal difficulties in the way of acceding to their request. He is to explain that their only remedy is to send a duly authorized agent, with full evidence, to bring civil suit against Panda Tsang in the British Indian Courts." (IOR, L/PS/12/4182, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 4 April 1934.)

shot. The police immediately retreated, but the shot ended the surprise breakout plan by putting the government forces on the alert.

A stalemate resulted. Government soldiers surrounded the house and took positions on the roofs of the surrounding houses, preventing anyone from entering or leaving but not attempting a full-scale attack. For the next few days, confusion reigned; shops in Lhasa closed, and some roads were blocked.

When this incident occurred, friends of Pandatsang such as Phabongka Chantsö, Göshamba, and Tsadrutsang held a meeting and decided that Phabongka Chantsö (the manager of Phabongka, one of the most famous Gelugpa lamas of the time) should sneak into Pandatsang's house through a secret door located in one of the shops at the back of Panda's house, to find out Panda's side of the story.[87] These friends then began secret negotiations with government officials, traders, and monastic figures. The key person in the government at this time was Trimön Shape. Phabongka Chantsö recalls their meeting:

> I alone went with Göshamba [an aristocrat and government official] to the house of Trimön to see him and discuss the case [with the hope of convincing him to help us]. We gave him 100 *dotse* as a gift/bribe (*gyabden*) and said there must be some way to reach a compromise. As we went outside, I told Göshamba to wait there a minute, for I had some personal business to discuss. Actually I was carrying the main gift in my pocket and when I went in I told him, "I have a little thing for you [so as not to be empty-handed]" and put the main gift on his table. Then I made the begging gesture with the thumbs and said, "Please, please." He then said, "Don't worry, don't worry."[88]

The friends of Pandatsang then persuaded Phabongka Rimpoche himself to go to petition the Kashag together with a representative of Ganden's Trisur Rimpoche. So unusual was it for a high lama to go in person to the Kashag that when they entered the shapes stood up and gave Phabongka a seat at the same level as their own seats. Phabongka Rimpoche said he was very sorry about what had happened, but that while they should punish Tobgye appropriately, the Pandatsang members in Lhasa had nothing to do with the Kham events and were blame-

87. Trinley Thargye, interview. (He was Phabongka Rimpoche's manager.)
88. Ibid.

less. He reminded them that Pandatsang had faithfully served the Dalai Lama and the government. Phabongka's key argument concerned the wool trade. Since Pandatsang acted as the agent for the Tibetan government, a tremendous amount of money was involved in their dealings. If their property in Lhasa were sealed, all debts would be voided and the government would not be able to collect the major part of the wool money that was abroad. Since Pandatsang's Lhasa property would not equal the government income from the wool, it was in the government's own interests not to seal the property. Phabongka also assured the shapes that Pandatsang would turn over the rifles and pistols he had in Lhasa and would provide replacements for the weapons stolen by Tobgye in Kham.

The shapes said they were willing to rescind the order, provided that Pandatsang, supported by other prominent persons, signed a formal guarantee that he would make a full accounting and promptly pay all the money he owed. Then and there Trimön wrote a draft guarantee-petition and told Phabongka and the others to see if other potential guarantors would agree to the terms. They did, and the guarantee was sent to the Kashag. To their surprise, the Kashag did not approve it but instead brought it before the National Assembly. Phabongka Chantsö recalled:

> We were all shocked at this news and the guarantors became very worried and were about to withdraw. I went everywhere day and night and talked to everyone. I gave the representative of Sera Mey college, Tigica, an automatic pistol. I also got Chamsu from Sera Mey college and Saw Depo from Drepung's Gomang college to support me. When the assembly meeting convened, Tigica said, "What is this nonsense of talking about the Pandatsang affair here? Wasn't it started by the Kashag [by issuing the order to seal his property]? Who is Pandatsang? Is he a foreigner or a Tibetan? Are they above or below the Tibetan government? If below, then why didn't the trungtsigye [officials] go and seal their property rather than having the soldiers surround their house and wait? It is a disgrace. This [the Pandatsang affair] is the act of the Kashag so it has to be completed by the Kashag. There is no reason why the Kashag has to wash their hands on the assembly. Therefore, the matter should not be discussed here but should be sent back to the Kashag for completion. If the Kashag's actions are not satisfactory, then and only then should the assembly consider the matter. Don't you all think so?" The

other monastic representatives immediately agreed. No one else said anything, so the decision was made to send the matter back, and the Kashag accepted the earlier agreement as planned.[89]

The Kashag's explanation of this affair to the political officer in Sikkim is interesting:

> No sooner were steps taken to arrest the Panda family here than the heads of various monasteries and different traders, headed by the ex-Ganden Ti Rimpoche, waited on [the Tibetan government] for days together and pleaded on behalf of the Panda Tsang family. They said that they could satisfy the Tibetan government that the Panda Tsang family had not entered into any rebellious combination; adding that they would forthwith send men from the family to Kham to advise and enjoin the brothers there not to behave in such an ungrateful manner. In view of this representation, the Panda Tsang family have been let off for the time being. We have, however, had the deputation execute an agreement by virtue of which they hold themselves responsible for the big account which Panda Tsang have to render to the Tibetan Government [several words missing] same time everything belonging to Panda Tsang [one word missing] been handed over to them. For the present no action is to be taken against the agents at Kalimpong.[90]

At this time a witty street song became popular in Lhasa:

> From the golden house of Pandatsang,
> a golden arrow was shot.
> On the roof of Trimön Shape
> it fell, making the sound "crack."[91]

This song, of course, correctly insinuates that Pandatsang bribed Trimön.

89. Ibid.

90. IOR, L/PS/12/4182, letter from the Kashag to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 4 April 1934. It was not until March 1939 that the Tibetan government asked the British to sell Pandatsang the 238 replacement guns stolen by his brother, plus 200 rounds of ammunition for each weapon. Even then, Pandatsang asked the British to sell him used guns. (IOR, L/PS/12/4182, letter from the Kashag to the political officer, dated 20 March 1939; letter from H. E. Richardson to the political officer, dated 6 April 1939).

91. In Tibetan: *gser khyim spom mda' tshang nas / gser gyi mda' mo btang song / sa dbang khri smon thog khar / jag sgra brgyabs nas 'bab song.*

While these events were taking place in Lhasa, the Tibetan government sent a message through its office in Nanking requesting the Chinese government to deport Tobgye and his troops. It is supposed to have been to this effect:

> The Pandatsang issue has developed and disturbed the peace and stability of the country. It is necessary to defeat him. They could not bear their own guilt so they ran into your territory. The maintenance of a peaceful relationship between Tibet and China is a must for the future, so we request you to deport Pandatsang and his forces to Tibet. If this is not done then we cannot guarantee the stability of our relations, so we request that you consider this matter.[92]

The Chinese did not comply, but neither did they help Tobgye to launch a counterattack. He remained in the Kham area under their control and did not return until after the Chinese Communist victory in 1950. The Pandatsang uprising, in a sense, portends later events where the Khambas' inherent distrust of the Tibetan (Lhasa) government precluded Tibetan unity against the Chinese.

The reluctance of the Tibetan government to punish Pandatsang was only partly due to the gifts to Trimön and the fear of losing government funds held by the Pandatsang Company. As will be seen in the next chapter, the Pandatsang affair occurred just as the Lungshar move for power was unfolding in Lhasa, and Trimön was concerned about the possibility that the two groups might coalesce. Pandatsang himself told one of our sources that he was fortunate that the Lungshar business was in progress when his troubles started.[93]

92. Anon1, interview.
93. Gelek (Rimpoche), interview. The information was told to him by Sambo (Rimshi).

6

IN SEARCH OF A NEW TIBET: LUNGSHAR'S REFORM PARTY

After the fall of Kumbela, the assembly returned to its discussion of the nature of the interregnum government. Lungshar's supporters again argued for a Council of Regents, but the abbots insisted that Tibet must have a lama as regent so that Tibetans would have someone to venerate and prostrate before. This view prevailed; it was decided to select an incarnate lama who would share power with the Lönchen Langdün.

THE APPOINTMENT OF A REGENT

The selection of a lama as regent customarily included four categories of candidates: the current abbot (Thriba) of Ganden monastery;[1] all former abbots (Thrisur) of Ganden monastery; the high-ranking incarnations (Gyetru Hutuktu) who formerly served as regents such as Reting, Tshömoling, Kundeling, Tengyeling, and Ditru; and one or two other well-known incarnate lamas. Demographic factors, however, limited the possibilities. In addition to the current Ganden Abbot, Minyang Ami Yeshe Wangden, there was only one ex–Ganden Abbot, Chamba Chödrak. Of the Gyetru Hutuktus, only the twenty-four-year-

1. The term *thriba* ("enthroned one") is used rather than *khembo* ("abbot"), because he is considered the successor to the throne of Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelugpa sect. The Ganden Abbot is considered the head of the Gelugpa sect.



23.

Reting Rimpoche with his bodyguard (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

old Reting Rimpoche, Jampey Yeshe, was appropriate (see Figure 23).[2] In addition to these, assembly members suggested the most famous Gelugpa lama of the era, Phurbucho Rimpoche, Thubten Jampa Tshütrim.

The ex–Ganden Abbot was favored by the majority of the officials. Although he was not a reincarnation, his erudition and piety were famous, as was his generosity. However, since he was close to eighty years old, he decided to withdraw his name, leaving the other three as final candidates.[3] Either the current Ganden Abbot or Phurbucho Rimpoche should have been selected, for both were highly respected and experienced. The young and inexperienced Reting, however, was also

2. Reting monastery, located about sixty miles north of Lhasa, was erected in 1056 by Drom, the chief disciple of Atisha. During the 7th Dalai Lama's reign, the monastery was given to the Dalai Lama's teacher. When he died, his reincarnation was sought and called Reting Rimpoche, as all subsequent incarnations have been (Surkhang ms.).

3. Surkhang ms.



24.

Group portrait of Lhasa officials and family. Kapshöba is second from right in top row.

seriously considered because of the unusual interest the Dalai Lama had taken in him when he visited Reting monastery in 1933. At that time he gave the young Reting his own divination manuscript and dice, supposedly telling him, "I have been using these and they have proved good and if you use them it will prove useful for you too."[4] Reting's supporters argued that this was a sign that the late Dalai Lama wanted him to become regent. Reting was also famous in his own right for having performed several miracles as a child.

The assembly was unable to agree on a candidate. They finally decided to select the regent by means of the divine lottery (*senriy*). On or

4. Sle zur (1984: 4) mentions only the divination book, not the dice. He also says that Reting's manager, Jamyang Delek, wrote to Reting from Lhasa advising him to withdraw his name from consideration as regent (ibid.: 6).

about 24 January 1934, the ex–Ganden Abbot conducted the lottery in the presence of all government officials, abbots, and other members of the assembly. The lottery selected Reting, who was installed on the tenth day of the first month of the Wood-Dog year (23 February 1934).[5]

The combination of Reting, an inexperienced, youthful lama, and the young and ineffective Lönchen Langdün allowed the Kashag, under the leadership of Trimön, quickly to reassume its role as the most important office in the government.[6] From Lungshar's point of view, the Kashag was as unsuitable as the two "child" rulers. Their failure to block the proposed Chinese condolence mission to Lhasa seemed to him an ominous beginning to the twenty-year interregnum period and reinforced his doubts about the ability of the new joint leadership to uphold Tibet's political status in the face of increased Chinese pressure.

Moreover, he was disturbed by signs of a return to the lax ethical standards that pre-dated the 13th Dalai Lama. During the first months after the Dalai Lama's death, the Kashag (and the lönchen) granted a series of tax concessions, interest-free loans, and even outright gifts to the upper-strata noble families and the monastic segment.[7] Lungshar,

5. F0371/18105, telegram from the Kashag to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 24 January 1934; F0371/18105, letter no. 7(4)–P/34, from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 5 March 1934. The telegram from Kashag informed the British of Reting's installation as follows: "[Reting] will be installed as Regent immediately and the Lonchen and Kashag will be responsible for the civil and military affairs as heretofore."

6. The Kashag had been virtually ignored by the 13th Dalai Lama and his favorites. J. L. R. Weir, the Political Officer in Sikkim, commented on the Kashag's decline when he visited Lhasa in 1930: "In theory the government of Tibet is entrusted to the Council of Four Shapes who deliberate on, and discuss any matters of importance and submit suggestions through the Prime Minister for final orders of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In actual practice this procedure is now considerably modified. Letters addressed to the Tibetan Government are passed without comment of the Council [Kashag] or Prime Minister to the Dalai Lama." (IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from J. L. R. Weir to the Government of India, dated 25 May 1930.)

7. Such loans commonly became permanent loans. This apparent shift did not go unnoticed in Lhasa, and a sarcastic wall poster appeared in Lhasa outside the Kashag's office where a Chinese signboard (*p'an*) hung that had been given by a Manchu emperor to the Kashag. Many years earlier the Kashag had stuck a Tibetan translation above this which said: "[You] specially increase merit and good fortune to everyone, the spiritual and temporal, inner and outer" (*phyi nang bstan srid yongs la bsod nams kyi dge tshogs lhag par spel*). In early 1934, a new poster was stuck above the translation, saying sarcastically: "[You] specially increase the feast of grain and money to everyone" (*phyi nang skye 'gro yongs la 'bru dngul gyi ston mo lhag par spel*).

though certainly ambitious for personal power, had worked energetically during the Dalai Lama's lifetime to increase the income and power of the central government. Convinced that only a strong ruler could control the powerful vested interests who longed for a return to a weak central government, he saw himself as the one to fill this need.[8] With the regency decided, however, Lungshar's aspirations could no longer be met within the current structure, so he attempted to change important aspects of the political system itself.

LUNGSHAR'S REFORM MOVEMENT

Understanding of modern political concepts was virtually nonexistent in the Lhasa of 1934. There were no newspapers or radio stations, and only a handful of officials knew any foreign language. Religion and the serf-based economic system formed the unquestioned foundation of life. It would have been futile to try to organize a revolutionary political party. Consequently, Lungshar developed and orchestrated a

8. Many in Tibet and China today misinterpret Lungshar's "modern" outlook as being pro-British. Khung (1985: 119), a Chinese official who was a member of Huang Mu-sung's Mission to Lhasa in 1934, for example, states that Lungshar was really a stooge of the British. In reality, Lungshar differed from the earlier "military" radicals such as Tsarong precisely because he was not partial to the British. As the following letters illustrate, the British did not view him as an ally. F. M. Bailey, the political officer in Sikkim, wrote to the foreign secretary in New Delhi in 1927 that "Tsarong Shape has fallen from favour and his place has been [taken] by Lungshar. This Lungshar is the man who took the Tibetan boys to England in 1913. On this occasion he endeavoured to intrigue with the Chinese both in Calcutta and in London. . . His visit to England has given him great influence owing to his comparatively wider experience. I do not think that his influence will last long *and I am doing my best to undermine it.*" (IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 6 June 1927; emphasis added.) Similarly, J. L. R. Weir, Bailey's successor, wrote in 1928, "Lungshar is the power behind the throne. He is definitely anti-Chinese but, although events in Tibet have not been all in our favour during the last few years, I do not think him so much anti-British as pro-Tibetan. He is anxious for the old seclusion of Tibet to be re-established. He was rubbed the wrong way when in England with Gould and Laden La and the Tibetan boys. He will want tactful handling." (IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 13 November 1928.) And in 1929 Weir wrote, "It is reported that Lungshar is the most powerful man in Tibet at the present moment as the Dalai Lama has complete confidence in him. A disturbing feature is that he is reported to have Russophile leanings." (IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 15 April 1929.)

plan that camouflaged his modern and reformist views with the ideology and values of the traditional system.

The critical reform Lungshar advocated concerned the Kashag. He wanted the shapes' lifelong terms of office to be replaced by four-year terms. Moreover, he wanted the National Assembly to select the shapes, thereby making the shapes responsible to the assembly. This represented a radical change, shifting power from the large landholders who tended to dominate the Kashag to the assembly, which was Lungshar's base of power.

In order to force this change, Lungshar had to gain the support of a large number of officials, particularly monk officials (including some monastic leaders), since their presence would lend religious legitimacy to what otherwise could be seen as simply a group of poor and radical aristocrats.[9] First he met secretly with Temba Jayan, an influential and popular monk official who agreed that change was needed. After Lungshar presented his plan for an organization of "patriotic" officials to increase the oversight powers of the National Assembly, they jointly drafted a petition or manifesto in extremely general and innocuous terms so as not to frighten away initial support.[10] According to one participant, it stated: that the Dalai Lama's tomb should be completed without obstacles, that the true incarnation of the Dalai Lama should be found quickly, and that the dual form of government should not be allowed to degenerate. Since the Kashag was presumably already managing all this, the petition had to be taken as a criticism of Kashag ability or commitment. Signing the petition was consequently perceived as a somewhat risky undertaking.

Given the different backgrounds and orientations of the monk and lay official segments, Lungshar and Temba Jayan decided to approach (and recruit) them separately, using two identical copies of the petition, one to be signed by lay officials, the other by monk officials. Lungshar at this time apparently already had an inner circle of dedicated supporters, and they began to recruit members secretly for a movement Lung-

9. The series of almost daily National Assembly meetings held immediately after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama played an important role in the genesis of this party. Those meetings brought officials together day after day and gave them a chance to exchange ideas about the future in a way not normally possible.

10. Lhalu, interview.

shar euphemistically called the Kyicho Küntün, literally, "all united on the side of happiness."[11]

Lungshar employed basically the same strategy he had used in the Kumbela affair: he created an issue that could rally wide support. He argued that due to inefficiency, venality, and incompetence the interregnum government could not maintain Tibet's present status and thus could not be trusted to turn over a strong Tibet to the 14th Dalai Lama when he came of age roughly two decades hence. Thus, it was the duty of patriotic officials and monastic leaders to act to save Tibet for the as yet undiscovered Dalai Lama. To do this, the existing leadership would have to be overseen carefully.

Kongtru, a monk official, was responsible for recruiting other monk officials.[12] He used the daily tea ceremony to initiate conversations and drew officials in by discussing a prophecy that warned that a *stupa* without a head would come to Tibet.[13] This prophecy, he said, had important implications because it could refer to the golden *stupa* that was being constructed as the late Dalai Lama's tomb. Any obstruction to the construction could impede or prevent the discovery of the true incarnation of the late Dalai Lama and thereby ultimately destroy the continuation of the dual religious-secular form of government.[14] Although couched in symbolic religious terms, this statement implied a lack of confidence in the present leadership, since they were responsible for the construction of the *stupa*.

Because they had no children (and usually no estates) to divide their attention or loyalty, monk officials considered themselves the real protectors of the government. Therefore, Kongtru emphasized the need

11. Ibid. The membership of this innermost core included the lay officials Gyekar Nangba, Menriba, Draktönba, Canglocen Khung, Gacan Demba, Yülha, Kyitöpa, Lhalu, Tso Chungwa, Tsipa Kabten, and Chaba Rusur and Lhalu (two of Lungshar's sons). The key monk officials were Kongtru and Takali. The monastic segment was represented by Drepung's Saw Depa, Sera Mey's Chamön Depa (or Chasur Depa) and Ganden's Kongpo Trinley. With the exception of Canglocen and Kyitöpa, none of the supporters was from a big aristocratic family, and none held a high position.

12. Temba Jayan, who wanted to remain anonymous, arranged for his monk-official pupil Kongtru (Thubten Genden) to work openly with Lungshar to organize the monk officials (ibid.).

13. Because all monk officials in Lhasa were required to attend the official tea ceremony (*trungja*) every day, it was an ideal time for contacting and recruiting them.

14. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara), 1984: 60–61; Thubten Sanggye, interview; Lhalu, interview.

for monk officials to take the lead during these dangerous and critical times. When a large number of monk officials had expressed interest and support, Kongtru launched the next phase of the plan: inducing them to sign the Kyicho Küntün document.

Kongtru accomplished this without formal meetings. Typically he would casually walk home from the tea ceremony with a sympathetic monk offical, invite him in for tea, and at some point in the conversation bring out the petition.[15] Lhautara recalls that at the time he read it, the manifesto already contained the signatures of about forty monk officials.[16] Simultaneously, Lungshar recruited members among the lay officials. Lhalu says that the first three signatures on the lay official document were those of Lungshar, himself, and his older half-brother Chaba Rusur.[17]

This secret recruitment generated a mixed atmosphere of excitement, speculation, and fear. The question of whether or not to join was uppermost on most officials' minds. Taring, for example, remembered that a relative urged him to sign the agreement but he was too afraid of the consequences to do so.[18]

After about two months (in about mid-March 1934), Lungshar and Temba Jayan met at night in Lungshar's house to take stock of their progress. They tallied the number of individuals who had joined each section and decided that the time was ripe to hold meetings and openly merge the two sections.[19]

The first meeting involved the monk-official signatories and was held at Kongtru's house. About eighty monk officials came, filling his two rooms, his courtyard, and even the corridors of his house. Kongtru first asked them whether they wanted any changes made in the original document they had signed. When the officials unanimously agreed that the document was acceptable as it was, thereby publicly committing themselves to the organization,[20] Kongtru told them that several lay officials

15. The scroll was about two feet wide and three feet long, with the written section on top and a large empty space beneath it for seals (signatures) (Lhalu, interview).
16. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1984: 62–63. He was a member of the group.
17. Lhalu, interview; Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 102.
18. J. Taring, interview.
19. Lhalu, interview.
20. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1984: 61.

wanted to participate in their patriotic action, so he had invited thei to come the day after tomorrow. Although no one openly objected, few monk officials quietly grumbled that if lay officials were allowed t join, their group's unity would be lost. But the plan for a meeting tw days hence was made.[21]

At that second meeting, Menriba, one of the four key followers (Lungshar,[22] spoke to the monk officials for the first time on the moı directly political aspects of the movement. Lhautara recalls that he saic

> We lay officials depend for everything we have on the religious-secular form of government and at this time when the government is weak we should take the lead in supporting it. Nevertheless, we thank you monk officials for your efforts [to these ends]. We lay officials have twenty-three persons in our group, but today I won't say their names. We four have come as their representatives. The government's manner of making appointments and demotions is not at all fair. Some positions like Tsanyer, Tsamshe, and Shingnyer lose money for the holders. These are jointly held by monk and lay officials but the lay officials have estates to support them while the monk officials have nothing [and thus have hardships]. However, the positions of power like the shapes only have one monk official out of four and this is unfair. The monks officials should get an additional shape seat and the lay officials should only have two. Moreover, Trimön now holds the power in the Kashag and however one looks he is dishonest and unfair.[23]

Menriba's comments dramatically escalated the stakes, promptin much animated debate. Lobsang Tashi responded that the monk off cials did not know anything about the Kashag, and since none of thei had the ability to be in the Kashag, they had no interest in requestin an additional shape.[24] As for Trimön's honesty, Lobsang disclaime firsthand knowledge and doubted whether anyone else had anythin concrete to report. Many monk officials supported him, pointing ou for example, that their appointments and demotions were made by th

21. Ibid.: 62–63.

22. Lha'u rta ra (ibid.: 63), remembered three of the four: Gyekar Nangba, Menrib and Draktönba. Canglocen was probably the fourth official.

23. Ibid.

24. Lobsang Tashi was one of the two regents (*sitshab*) left in Lhasa in 1950 whe the 14th Dalai Lama fled to Yatrung.

Yigtsang, not the Kashag, so they could not comment on Trimön's honesty. Others said that if the lay officials wanted to make such an accusation they should make it separately from the monks' petition.[25]

At this point Lhautara asked Kongtru privately whether such statements would not infuriate the regent and precipitate his resignation, since in essence Reting would have had to approve Trimön's actions. Kongtru replied that there had been secret discussions in which Reting agreed with the organization's position. Lhautara does not mention Temba Jayan, but it was he who had convinced Reting that these changes would in no way alter the prerogatives of the regent.[26] Kongtru explained that he had not brought this to light at the general meeting because of possible leaks.

The open discussion of reform and dishonesty produced three responses among the members. One group of about fifteen officials followed Kongtru's lead and advocated the complete Lungshar proposal. Another forty or so officials opposed this openly. The remaining group of twenty-five to thirty was in the middle. By the end of the meeting, each of these groups was suspicious of the others.[27] Kongtru ended the meeting by saying he would seek the advice of Temba Jayan, a respected senior monk official. A day or so later, they reconvened and Kongtru informed the members that Temba Jayan advised that the petition should be sent and should contain the above-mentioned three points, as well as the one regarding Trimön's dishonesty.[28] He also said that the petition should be presented to the Kashag by three or four lay officials and the ten monk officials whose names he read aloud (without, according to Lhautara, first clearing this plan with these individuals).

The final petition was written by the lay official Canglocen, the party's secretary. According to Lhalu, it contained two points: (1) The government needs some changes to improve its functioning; and (2) the work of the Kashag is not satisfactory. In particular, Trimön Shape is nepotistic and unfair. (Lhalu is unsure whether Trimön was mentioned by name or whether the petition simply mentioned the

25. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara), 1984: 63–64.
26. Lhalu, interview.
27. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara), 1984: 65–67.
28. Ibid: 65.

shapes.)[29] According to Lhautara, the petition contained four points: (1) the tomb of the 13th Dalai Lama should be completed without delays or obstruction; (2) the new incarnation of the Dalai Lama should be found quickly and without error; (3) the government should not be allowed to decline but should be improved; (4) Trimön Shape is completely dishonest and unfair in whatever he does.[30]

Equally important was a very cleverly worded ending composed by Canglocen, which avoided listing each name but indicated that there were about 100 officials involved, and implicitly insulted the Kashag by characterizing these officials as "thoughtful."[31] Other officials such as Lhautara, Lungshar's son, Canjula, and the British verified that there were about 100 members, that is to say, one-fifth to one-quarter of the total number of government officials and a far larger proportion of those present in Lhasa at the time.[32]

Lungshar was convinced that the Kashag would have to show the petition to the regent and the lönchen. They, in turn, would not want to confront the issue alone and would convene the National Assembly to discuss it. Lungshar's supporters would then manipulate the situation and implement the reforms, which would transfer a large portion of the Kashag's power to the assembly. Lungshar undoubtedly believed the assembly would then catapult him into a dominant position, either as a shape or as an additional lönchen. From there, he could control the conservatives and modernize the state.[33] Lungshar was playing a high-risk game.

29. Lhalu, interview.

30. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara), 1984: 66–67.

31. In Tibetan, *drung rigs ser rgya bsam yod brgya skor* ("[by] 100 or so thoughtful monk and lay officials") (Lhalu, interview).

32. Many officials were on duty in the various districts throughout the country. Norbhu Döndup, then in Lhasa, reported that a small number of officials supported the Kashag and the lönchen, but that the majority of the lay officials did not openly support either party. (IOR, L/PS/12/4178 [PZ 4115/34], report of Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, arrived 25 April 1934.) Lungshar expected to bring these "fence-sitters" into his camp once he could demonstrate to them that he was emerging as the victor.

33. Lhalu, interview. Others suggest that Lungshar also wanted to insure: (1) that no officer hold more than one appointment, thus eliminating the practice of prominent officials holding several important positions and having their servants do the work while others (implicitly, those without wealth or connections) held no position from which to derive income; (2) that a monk official should be appointed as the colleague of every lay

A different version of the Lungshar affair contends that Lungshar intended to assassinate Trimön at the time the Kyicho Küntün's petition was presented to the shapes and then to assume control of the government.[34] While there is a well-known precedent for this (as well as for the use of the assembly), there seems to be no advantage to assassinating Trimön in the Kashag office when it could have been done anonymously at night.

PRECEDENTS FOR LUNGSHAR'S ORGANIZATION

After the 11th Dalai Lama died in April 1856, the Kashag asked Reting Rimpoche to serve as regent. By 1858, Shatra (Wangchug Gyebo), one of the shapes, had decided that the regent was abusing his power by using his own seal to give out titles and estates without consulting the Kashag. The Kashag proposed that a new post, Keeper of the Seal (who was to be Shatra), be created, claiming that this would actually increase the regent's prestige. The regent at first agreed, but when he was warned that this was a ploy by Shatra to limit his powers, he exiled Shatra first to his estate in Nyemo and then to remote Western Tibet.

By means of letters sent secretly through a snuff merchant, Shatra

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official; (3) that the assembly should control all government appointments, promotions, and terminations above the fourth rank; (4) that no official should be given larger estates than necessary; and (5) that the government should adopt a firm attitude toward the Chinese mission and that an intelligence officer appointed in consultation with the National Assembly should be attached to the Chinese mission to watch their activities. These goals certainly were not part of the initial petition to the Kashag; at best they were part of a program of reform that would have been implemented after Lungshar and his party took control. (Various reforms are mentioned by Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1984; Surkhang ms.; Sambo [Rimshi], interview; Anon1, interview.)

34. In late April 1934, Lungshar sent two servants to Gangtok with letters requesting the British political officer to ask the Government of India to sell him thirty rifles, a Lewis gun, and 31,000 rounds of ammunition. It is not known how Lungshar intended to use these weapons. The political officer in Sikkim instructed his subordinate, Norbhu Döndup (who had arrived in Lhasa on 16 April 1934), as follows: "If we find that we can, in some way, put Lungshar under an obligation to us, it would, in view of his great influence, be useful. But his personal request cannot, of course, be entertained." (IOR, L/PS/12/4178, 27 April 1934.) Lungshar, however, had no control over the military and there is no evidence that he had made any arrangements for large numbers of monks or officials to make a show of force.

contacted a close supporter, Palden Döndrup, in Ganden monastery. They worked out a plan that secured the backing of the monks of both Ganden and Drepung, and in 1862 Shatra returned to Lhasa. When he reached Drepung monastery the monks joined him in a great procession to Lhasa. When Shatra stopped at a park just opposite the Norbulinga Palace complex, the young 12th Dalai Lama sent him tea and a ceremonial scarf as a gesture of greeting. The procession continued to Shatra's home in Lhasa. The next day Shatra and his forces took over control of the sacred Tsuglagang Temple in the center of town, where he established his headquarters and proclaimed himself prime minister (*desi*). He then sent letters to all government officials listing the misdeeds of the Reting Regent and inviting them to join him at a large meeting the next day, called the Great [Assembly] of Government Officials, Ganden and Drepung (Gandre Drungche). The government troops that protected the regent's residence came over to Shatra's side, and Reting fled to Sera monastery, where his monk followers in Sera Che college protected him. In Lhasa, virtually all the government officials threw in their lot with Shatra, who, with the ad hoc assembly, began issuing government orders from the Tsuglagang and holding the monk officials' daily tea ceremony there. Reting and two senior officials then fled to China, leaving Shatra in complete control.[35]

The other relevant coup occurred in the chaotic days of the early eighteenth century. The Kashag then consisted of four members, Khangchennay, Ngabö, Lumpa, and Jaranay, with Khangchennay being the most powerful. The others plotted to assassinate him and chose a meeting of the Kashag, for this was a time when he would not be surrounded by bodyguards. In 1717, Ngabö Shape's brother brought a letter for Khangchennay to the Kashag. As Khangchennay began to read the letter, he seized him from behind and, with the help of the three other shapes, stabbed him to death. They then killed his bodyguards and a number of his other supporters and seized control of Central Tibet.[36]

35. This account derives primarily from Shakabpa 1967: 183–87. The use of the term *desi* (rather than lönchen) implies a return to the authority of the prime minister of the 5th Dalai Lama, who ruled even after the Dalai Lama reached majority age.
36. Shakabpa 1967: 141–45.

THE FALL OF LUNGSHAR

The next step in Lungshar's plan was to present the petition to the Kashag on the morning of 10 May, a time known only to a small group of trusted supporters.[37] In spite of the secrecy, however, on the evening of the ninth a young lay official named Kapshöba (Chögye Nyima) went to Trimön and informed on Lungshar (see Figure 24).[38]

Kapshöba had had close personal relations with Lungshar, who had helped his career in the Tsigang Office. He had joined Lungshar's lay-official group but, dissatisfied with being just a common member, he tried to gain acceptance in the so-called inner circle. When Lungshar excluded him, he decided he could best further his career by throwing in his lot with Trimön. Kapshöba tried to enhance the value of his information by deceitfully adding the assassination of Trimön as a goal of the Lungshar plan, telling Trimön, in effect, "Now times are not good in Tibet. The Dalai Lama is no longer with us and people are hungry for power. Even your life is in jeopardy."[39] This prevarication was critical: a plot to murder a shape in the Kashag itself and seize power was far more serious than the mere presentation of a petition accusing him of misdeeds.

As a result of Kapshöba's warning, early on the morning of 10 May, Trimön went with a large retinue of servants and Khamba bodyguards to inform the regent and the lönchen of the "plot."[40] The latter were

37. The date is cited in F0371/18106, report from Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa cited in a letter from F. W. Williamson, the political officer in Sikkim, to the Government of India, dated 26 May 1934. The delegates carrying the petition included a number of Lungshar's closest supporters such as Menriba, Draktönba, Gyekar Nangba, Kongtru, and probably Gacan Demba and Canglocen.

38. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1984: 68. Lhautara reports that he went to see Trimön on the afternoon of the tenth to inform Trimön that the petition had been delivered to the Kashag and was told by Trimön's manager that Kapshöba had told Trimön about it the previous evening.

39. Anon1, interview.

40. Shakapba recalls that morning: "We heard that Karchung and Menriba [core members of the party] were going to go to the Kashag and kill Trimön. . . . When I heard these rumors I went at once to Trimön's house at about 8 o'clock in the morning. When I asked where Trimön had gone an old manager told me he had left for the Kashag. I asked why he took so many servants if he was going to the Kashag and why all the mounts were missing. I was again told that he has gone to the Kashag at the Norbulinga Palace. However, since His Holiness's death no Kashag meeting had been held in Norbulinga so I wondered why? What he had told me did not make any sense. I thought what a liar

thrown into a state of fear, since the strength of Lungshar's party was not known nor was it clear whether he planned to assassinate others in the Kashag. They agreed that it would be best for Trimön to try to obtain sanctuary and support at Drepung, where he had close ties in Tsetang khamtsen of Loseling college. If this could be achieved, Drepung would be neutralized. It was also decided to arrest Lungshar before he could carry out his plans.[41]

Trimön, garbed in official robes, immediately left for Drepung with his large retinue, knowing that all the senior administrators (abbots, lachi, etc.) would come to greet him, as was the custom. He explained that there was a plot to kill him and that though he had many Khamba bodyguards who would defend him, he wanted to avoid bloodshed and desired protection from Drepung. This news shocked the monastic officials, who immediately agreed to protect him and support a thorough investigation into the matter by the regent and the lönchen. Trimön was taken to the safety of Gempö Utse, a small hermitage on a mountain peak above Drepung. The regent and the lönchen then moved against Lungshar.[42]

In the meantime, after the Kyicho Küntün delegates left to deliver the petition to the Kashag, Lungshar discovered that Trimön had left Lhasa. He immediately sent a messenger to tell them to return but the messenger could not catch up with them. The representatives presented the petition to the other shapes, who, having been forewarned, showed no surprise or dismay, but took the petition without saying a word.[43]

The Kashag put the army on alert on the morning of the tenth but did not want to provoke open fighting by arresting Lungshar, who, they assumed, possessed arms. Instead, they decided to lure him to his

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that fellow is. I asked [another servant] who had accompanied him and he told me the names. He also told me that Trimön had put on his amulet box [*kawu*] and had also taken the cloth travelling case for it. . . . If you are going on a long journey only then do you take the amulet box case. When the servant told me these details I became very suspicious. Later on I was told that he had gone straight to Reting Rimpoche to report these matters and also reported that he would be leaving for Drepung monastery. . . . All of these are Kapshöba's doings." (Shakabpa, interview.)

41. Surkhang ms.; Shakabpa, interview; Anon1, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

42. Ibid.

43. Lungshar Chanjula, interview.

arrest. That afternoon, after hearing that Trimön was safe, the Lönchen Langdün sent a message instructing Lungshar to attend an important meeting of the Trungtsigye, of which he was a member. This order placed Lungshar in an extremely delicate and dangerous situation: it could have been either a trap, or the first step in the government taking his party's demands to the assembly.

Lungshar had no real reason to suspect that the government would try to arrest him. He felt his organization was too strong to be challenged overtly; moreover, he had done nothing illegal. Furthermore, he could not risk missing a meeting that might have been called to discuss his party's charges against the Kashag. He also did not want to give the regent and the lönchen grounds for demoting him by disobeying their order. Not knowing, of course, that Kapshöba had accused him of plotting to murder Trimön and take over the country, Lungshar ignored warnings from his close friends and went to the palace.[44]

When he arrived at the Potala, he was told to go to the regent's office. There he was met by the aide-de-camp Phunraba, Trimön's nephew, who read an arrest order that said, "Until now you have held a high position and enjoyed the patronage of the government. Yet you have done undesirable things and have not appreciated the kindness of the late 13th Dalai Lama and the government. You are accused of serious crimes and it will be proved later whether or not they are true through a court of law. Until that time your status as a government official is withdrawn."[45]

Custom required that Lungshar's government robes and hair knot box then be removed, but the official in charge of this had to be called while Lungshar stood waiting. At this point, Lungshar decided to try to escape, believing he could reach his servant, get his pistol, and then on horseback reach Sera, where he felt his supporters could enlist the protection of the monks of Sera Mey college.

Bad luck again plagued Lungshar. As was the custom, he had left his horse with two servants at the base of the Potala (Talam Gongmo). A third servant had accompanied him up the long flights of stairs, and it

44. Lhalu, interview.
45. Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Lhalu (interview) added that the order also specifically accused him of trying to start a political party.

was with him that Lungshar had left his pistol (it was improper to carry weapons into the Potala). When Lungshar ran from the room, he expected immediately to meet the servant who had his gun. He was shocked to discover that the servant, who had gone to a latrine down a long flight of steps, was nowhere to be seen. Lungshar, ran down the stairs while the servant, on his way back, started running toward him holding out the gun and calling, "Master, here, master, here is the gun." At this point the guards at the top of the stairs started yelling, "He's escaping, he's gone," and started down after him.

Although none of the sweepers and janitors working along the sides of the steps dared touched Lungshar or make any effort to stop him, several jumped on the servant and took the gun just as Lungshar reached him. Lungshar later told his son and others that when he saw the servant holding out the gun he suddenly saw his wife and children before his eyes.[46] During this moment of hesitation, the servant was seized and immediately a huge Potala Palace guard caught Lungshar from behind and flung him down, smashing his head on the ground. The guard then picked up Lungshar (these guards are usually well over six feet tall and exceptionally strong) and carried him back to the regent's office, where the disrobing ceremony began.[47]

After stripping Lungshar of his official robe and hair knot box, Phunraba and his assistants began to take off Lungshar's shoes. When the first shoe was removed, Lungshar grabbed a piece of paper from it and swallowed it despite attempts to pluck it from his mouth. Lungshar's hands were held when the other shoe was removed, and to everyone's amazement, a second piece of paper was found on which had been written a black magic mantra: "Harm Trimön Norbu Wangye."[48] Lungshar was then taken to the Sharcenchog prison in the Potala. At the same time his house was searched and sealed. Had Lungshar succeeded in reaching Sera monastery, it is likely that the monks would

46. Lhalu, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview. The implication is that he feared what would happen to them if he shot and killed his pursuers.

47. Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Anon1, interview; Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 103–4; Lhalu, interview.

48. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1984: 68; Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Anon1, interview. In Tibetan: *Khri smon nor bu dbang rgyal gnan.* Black mantras are customarily put in boots so that the victim's name is constantly trampled underfoot. This is considered a very serious crime, as repulsive as an outright murder attempt.

have negotiated some compromise with the government. But he did not; so exactly four months after Kumbela was imprisoned, on the twenty-seventh of the third Tibetan month of the Wood-Dog year (10 May 1934), Lungshar found himself in the same prison dungeon where Kumbela had been sent.

Kapshöba was also arrested at this time but was treated far less harshly than Lungshar. He was placed in a relatively nice room and was permitted to wear normal layman's clothes, instead of the coarse white wool clothes of common prisoners.[49] The arrest of Kapshöba allowed Trimön to imply that Kapshöba was involved in the party and that he testified against Lungshar and the others only after his arrest and interrogation.

On 11 or 12 May, Lungshar's inner circle of supporters decided to demand his release. If their demand was refused, they would try to release him by force. Canglocen went to Drepung's Gomang college and Menriba went to Sera May college to enlist the support of the monks. Both monasteries agreed to help.[50]

On the next day, when about a dozen senior monks went to the Potala to ask for Lungshar's release, the lönchen told them about the black-magic papers found in Lungshar's boot. He apparently convinced them that the monasteries should not help a person who would resort to black magic.[51]

The next evening, Chaba Rusu, Lungshar's son, and other inner-circle supporters decided to try to free Lungshar from jail. The aid of Lhalu, another son, was also enlisted. The plan called for a huge monk official nicknamed Tsitrung Beyba to lead a small party, armed with guns and pickaxes, to destroy the gate just below Sharcenchog late that night. While the guards' attention was distracted by the commotion at the gate, Lhalu, Chaba Rusu, and a few servants would enter Sharcenchog through a latrine attached to the back of the Potala. They would then bring their father out the same way and take him at once to Sera Mey college.

49. Anon1, interview. This was told to Anon1 by Lady Lhalu.
50. F0371/18106, report from Norbhu Döndup in Lhasa, cited in letter no. 7(4)-P/34 from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 28 May 1934.
51. Ibid.

Lhalu at once agreed and passed out pistols to the servants he was going to take. However, Lady Lhalu found out and argued that the entire Lhalu family could be destroyed by his rashness. She insisted that they could obtain the release of Lungshar by means of gifts and bribes. Lhalu capitulated, and when Chaba Rusu returned to the meeting, the others lost their enthusiasm and disbanded.[52]

On the next day, all the main party members, including Lhalu and Chaba Rusu, were arrested and their houses sealed.[53] When the monasteries refused to turn over Lungshar's three main monk supporters, Saw Depa Könchok, Tigica, and Chamön Depa, however, the regent, the lönchen, and the Kashag decided not to confront the monks at this volatile time.[54]

The regent, the lönchen, and the Kashag appointed the customary investigating committee to examine all documents recovered (e.g., those found in the sealed houses) and to interrogate the prisoners. The committee was composed of four officials, two from the lay corps and two from the monk-official corps: lay official Lukhang (Tsewang Rabten); lay official and commander-in-chief Nangarwa (Wangchug Tarchin); monk official Temba Jayan; monk official Dombo (Khenrab Wangchug).[55] Of these, Lukhang and Dombo were both pro-Trimön, Nangarwa was neutral, and Temba Jayan was pro-Lungshar.

The formal charge against Lungshar was that he was the leader of an organization of about 100 monk and lay officials who had tried to kill a shape and were plotting to overthrow the government and replace it with a Bolshevik system. The latter charge derived from the late Dalai Lama's "Political Last Testament," in which he warned that Tibet faced the danger of a Communist takeover and destruction of religion such as had befallen Outer Mongolia. This "Testament" became a major policy statement for the entire interregnum period:

> You must develop a good diplomatic relationship with our two powerful neighbors: India and China. Efficient and well-equipped troops must be stationed even on the minor frontiers bordering hostile forces. Such an

52. Lhalu, interview.
53. Ibid.
54. Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Anon1, interview.
55. Lhalu, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

army must be well trained in warfare as a sure deterrent against any adversaries.

Furthermore, this present era is rampant with the five forms of degeneration, in particular, *the red ideology.* In Outer Mongolia, the search for a reincarnation of Jetsun Dampa [the Grand Lama of Urga] was banned; the monastic properties and endowments were confiscated; the lamas and the monks were forced into the army; the Buddhist religion destroyed, leaving no trace of identity. Such a system, according to reports still being received, has been established in Ulan Bator [the capital of Outer Mongolia]. In the future, this system will certainly be forced either *from within or without* on this land that cherishes the joint spiritual and temporal system. If, in such an event, we fail to defend our land, the holy lamas, including "the triumphant father and son" [the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama] will be eliminated without a trace of their names remaining; the properties of the incarnate lamas and of the monasteries along with the endowments for religious services will all be seized. Moreover, our political system, originated by the three ancient kings, will be reduced to an empty name; my officials, deprived of their patrimony and property, will be subjugated like slaves by the enemy; and my people, subjected to fear and miseries, will be unable to endure day or night. Such an era will certainly come!

At the present time, when we enjoy peace and happiness as well as the admiration of others, inerrable common cause of religious and polity still remains in our hands. The political stability depends on the devotion of the ecclesiastic and secular officials and upon their ability to employ skillfully every diplomatic and military means without any possibility of regret or failure in the future.[56]

Other accusations made at the hearings included the charge that Lungshar fostered misunderstandings between the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama, that he had fomented dissension and conflict within the government, and that he had used black magic for his own ends.

When Lungshar was initially brought before the investigating committee, he is reported to have told them:

I have done nothing wrong. It is only that Kapshöba has invented this so as to gain benefit for himself. You have sealed my house and you have

56. Translation by Lobsang Lhalungpa cited in A lo chos mdzad 1983: 40 (emphasis added).

> gone through everything there. Have you found any document or any evidence of the things that I have been charged with? If you have, then I have nothing to say. But you haven't because there are none. . . . my only aim was to reform the Kashag by having elected members, nothing else.[57]

Kapshöba testified that the party had a secret "inner document" that he had accidentally seen in which the plot to kill Trimön and take over the government was described. However, no evidence of this document was ever unearthed.

While Lungshar and Kapshöba were being cross-examined together they had an exchange that has become famous in government circles. Lungshar told Kapshöba that he had helped him a great deal in the past and did not deserve what Kapshöba was doing to him. Kapshöba is said to have used a derogatory term of address (*gay*) and replied, "If you had helped me for the worth of 5 *garma*, I would have given you back the value of one *sho* [10 *garma* equal 1 *sho*]. In any case, this is not a time when one could repay a favor because your activities have put Ganden Photrang [the government] itself in danger. So therefore I could not repay the favors you have done and could not keep my mouth shut." He illustrated this with the phrase:

> Even though the sage gets drunk with beer,
> He won't exchange his skull for the beer.[58]

It is said that Lungshar then challenged the investigating committee to interrogate both him and Kapshöba by "corporal punishment interrogation" (*tshandri*)[59]—a whipping that is continued until one of the two people who have given conflicting testimony admits to having lied. The investigating committee refused, presumably because they did not want to inflict this on Kapshöba.

Lungshar later told Lady Lhalu that the members of the investigation team diligently wrote down everything that Kapshöba said but when he himself spoke they did not take detailed notes of his own

57. Anon1, interview.
58. Ibid. In Tibetan: *lto dang chang gis bzi kyang / kab li chang dang mi brjes.*
59. Lhalu, interview.

version but only looked on with expressions of disbelief and derision. Because of this, he decided that it was futile to argue and told them that "since you aren't paying attention to what I am saying, you can do whatever you like. I'm not going to say even one word." From that point on, Lungshar kept completely silent until the decision was made.[60]

Two of the other conspirators, Gyekar Nangba and Kongtru, were whipped and ultimately confessed to the existence of a plan to reform the government, although they did not admit that there was a plot to assassinate Trimön or create a Bolshevik government. Virtually the entire case, therefore, was based on the testimony of Kapshöba and the "inner document" he claimed to have seen.[61]

The investigating committee sentenced and punished Lungshar and his colleagues within a fortnight—unusual alacrity for Tibet. Although the committee concluded that death was the appropriate punishment for Lungshar, it feared that the spirit of someone as willful as Lungshar might become a vengeful ghost and interfere with the process of finding the new Dalai Lama or perhaps even harm him after he was born. Therefore, they recommended the next most serious punishment, mutilation—in this case, the removal of both eyeballs. They also recommended that all his property be confiscated and that he be imprisoned for life.[62] The committee initially recommended that each of his two sons, Chaba Rusu and Lhalu, have one hand amputated; however, this was moderated after prominent religious figures such as Phabongka Rimpoche and the Sera Che Abbot, Thubten Nyingpo, pleaded with Trimön to recommend a lesser punishment for the two boys.[63] He agreed to forego mutilation but insisted on including a proviso that neither they nor any of Lungshar's progeny in future generations could serve as government officials or lead three or more persons. It is said that Lungshar stood motionless while the punishments of blinding and confiscation were read, but when he heard about the permanent ban on

60. Lhalu, interview; Anon1, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
61. Lhalu, interview; Anon1, interview.
62. Lukhang later told Shakabpa that he would probably be reborn as a blind man because of his active part in this punishment (Shakabpa, interview).
63. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 105.

his progeny he lowered his head to express his feeling that this was grossly unfair.[64]

The Kashag agreed to the recommendation of the investigating committee, but Reting tried to avoid responsibility by telling the Kashag that it would not be proper for a lama and a Gelong (*bhikshu*) monk to sign a mutilation order. He told the shapes, "You all see to it," and the Lönchen Langdün replied, "I don't blame you, Rimpoche. We'll do it." Thus although only Langdün's signature was affixed to the punishment order, that did not mean that Reting had objected.[65] He could clearly have blocked the mutilation on religious grounds if he had wanted to do so; and this is certainly the way Lungshar's supporters viewed the issue during the later years of the interregnum period.

All the members of the so-called inner circle were punished by expulsion from government service, fines, confiscation of estates and property, and exile to remote parts of Tibet. The Shatra family, into which Lungshar's son Chaba Rusu had married, was ordered not to consider him as its head, but to exile him to one of the family's estates. Lhalu was placed under the supervision of Lady Lhalu, Lungshar's common-law wife and head of his adopted family.

Lungshar's punishment was carried out on the eighth day of the fourth Tibetan month in the Wood-Dog year (20 May 1934), a mere ten days after his arrest.[66] The punishment of taking out someone's eyeballs had not been exacted for such a long time that there was no one who had ever seen it done. Mutilation punishments were done by the untouchable caste known as the *ragyaba,* who in this instance told the government that they were able to do it only because their parents had told them how it was done. The method involved the placement of a smooth, round yak's knucklebone on each of the temples of the prisoner. These were then tied by leather thongs around the head and tightened by turning the thongs with a stick on top of the head until the eyeballs popped out. The prisoner was heavily doped with a drug called *langchen nyochu* ("the water that makes an elephant mad") during this

64. Anon1, interview; Lhalu, interview.
65. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 105; Lhalu, interview.
66. F0371/18106, XCA/62210, report of Norbhu Döndup cited in letter no. 7(4)-P/34, from the political officer in Sikkim to the foreign secretary to the Government of India, dated 28 May 1934.

process. (Lungshar later told his son that the medicine did not work well and that the pain was excruciating.)[67] The mutilation was terribly bungled. Only one eyeball popped out, and eventually the *ragyaba* had to cut out the other eyeball with a knife. Boiling oil was then poured into the sockets to cauterize the wound. Lungshar's son remembers that after his release Lungshar had a large scar where the eyeball was cut out. Perhaps his greatest pain, however, came from his fear that this was also happening to his sons. He had been told only that his two sons were getting punishments similar to his. One of the first questions he asked after he regained his senses was about the fate of his sons. He had taken a sacred vow to fast until death if they had been blinded.[68]

At this time a bitterly sardonic street song appeared in Lhasa that commented on the whole affair:

> Saying he's a cock, Trimön
> has arrived at Gempö Utse.
> The dawn has arrived;
> he has had a good crow.
> Saying he's a lama, Lungshar
> was doing prayers.
> Saying he's Drimeykunden,
> he has given his eyes as alms.[69]

The mass of monk officials who signed the Kyicho Küntün party's appeal to the government were all required to write statements about their involvement and were fined by the Yigtsang Office from one to four golden coins on the basis of their rank.[70] The monastic members were the only ones to avoid punishment.[71]

Kapshöba, not surprisingly, was released from prison on 18 August,

67. Lhalu, interview.
68. Lhalu, interview; Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 108.
69. Drimeykunden is the Buddha-to-be in a well-known Jataka tale. He gives up his wealth and riches and goes to search for true knowledge and salvation. Along the way he gives away all his possessions, including his eyes. In Tibetan: *khri smon bya sde yin zer / dge 'phel dbu rtser slebs shag / nam tshod thig po byung song / bya skad snyan po byung song / lung shar bla ma yin zer / bka' tshes gnang gin bzhugs shag / dri med kun ldan yin zer / spyan mig sbyin par btang song.*
70. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1984:70.
71. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, memorandum from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated July 1934.

only three months after Lungshar's punishment. His property was then restored to him,[72] and soon afterward he was reinstated as a "common" government official. Less than a year later, in April 1935, he was promoted to the rank of *rimshi* and appointed as an "additional" tsipön, the position Lungshar had held before his arrest. Clearly this was his payment for giving Trimön the wherewithal to destroy Lungshar.

At the time of Kapshöba's release and promotion, two misleading street songs were heard in Lhasa.

> The hair-knot [*pacö*] bought by 500 [*dotsè*]
> was put on on the twenty-fifth.
> Requesting tsipön office with 600,
> he obtained it suddenly.
>
> From the top of Kapshöba's roof
> a golden arrow has been shot [and]
> the honorable Lady Langdün's
> right hip has been broken.[73]

In both these songs the implication is that Kapshöba bribed his way first back into the government and then, amazingly, into the very important position of tsipön. Most knowledgeable officials, however, believe that Kapshöba himself composed these songs to try to cover up his role in exposing Lungshar.

Lungshar's son Lhalu later petitioned to be reinstated as a government official, arguing that he was not really Lungshar's son. He claimed his biological father was Shekarlingpa, another aristocrat, and both his mother and Shekarlingpa swore that this was so. Using this rather feeble ploy (and massive bribes), he was reinstated under the family name of Lhalu and given *seynamba* status. In the 1940s he became an important official. Another well-known Lhasa street song commented on this.

> If you get a wish-fulfilling gem
> whatever you do is alright.

72. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 26 August 1934.

73. In Tibetan: *lnga brgyas nyos pa'i pa lcogs / nyi shu lnga la brgyab song / drug brgyas rtsis dpon zhus yod / sag te kha la zhus yod. ka shod thog kha'i sgang nas / gser gyi mda' zhig brgyab song / yab gzhis lha lcam sku zhabs / dpyid 'go g.yas pa bcag song.*

Even if you change the parents who have
given you your body, it is alright.[74]

Lungshar's youngest son, Canjula, only succeeded in getting reinstated into government service in January 1947, a short time after his brother Lhalu had become shape.[75]

Lungshar himself was released from prison in May 1938 and placed in the custody of Lady Lhalu, his common-law wife. He died about one year later, from natural causes. Lhalu reports that Lungshar spent most of his time praying and never discussed the party or the events leading to his arrest with any of the children. He did, however, tell Lhalu that it was his karma to have illness with his eyes, for when he was young he shot a slingshot and knocked out the eyeball of a sheep. He also gave this advice to his children:

> If you become a government official do not keep in mind what has happened to your father because we are old people and we did not agree with each other on political issues. That was our problem; it should not involve you children. My advice for reforms were not accepted by them because their understanding is so limited. There are very few people who can really digest my advice. So this situation developed. But our blood is Tibetan. Tibet and Tibetans should not be forgotten even if you become king of the world. Even if you become a great lama and can levitate you should not forget Tibet and the Tibetan people. . You should never think of revenging their deeds.[76]

Canjula remembers that his father told him not to blame others for his downfall, because the decision not to use force was his own. Lungshar also used to say that as bad as prison was, it had one useful consequence: he was able to do one hundred million "o-mani" prayers.[77]

74. In Tibetan: *kun dga' don 'grub byung na / ga re byas kyang chog gis / lus srog sbyin pa'i pha ma / go brjes byas kyang chog gis.*

75. IOR, L/PS/12/4202, Lhasa letter of the week ending 12 January 1947.

76. Lungshar Chanjula, interview. Shortly after his imprisonment, through a doctor Lungshar sent his lama a letter in verse. It said that no matter how powerful one person might be, that person could take another's eyes by force but could not take his wisdom; and even if another's life were taken, they could not take his virtue. (Lha klu [Lhalu] 1983: 106–7.)

77. Lhalu, interview. "O mani padme hum" is the most common Tibetan prayer. It is generally said repeatedly while counting on a rosary.

Lungshar's movement was the last attempt to reform and revitalize the traditional political system before World War II. Its destruction was a major turning point in modern Tibetan history. Trimön, representing the prerogatives of the traditional system, outmaneuvered Lungshar and punished him in a way that intimidated other aristocrats. Lungshar's statement to his sons regarding the government officials' inability to understand his dreams for a new Tibet rings true in the light of the absurd charge that his party was trying to establish a Bolshevik form of government. For all his personal faults, Lungshar was one of the great figures in modern Tibetan history. In retrospect, his downfall must be seen as a main factor underlying the demise of the Lamaist State.

THE MISSION OF GENERAL HUANG MU-SUNG

While the Pandatsang and Lungshar affairs were riveting the attention of the Lhasa political elite, an equally important event of a different nature was unfolding in the international sphere. As was mentioned earlier, the Chinese Nationalist government requested and received permission to send a delegation to Lhasa to pay China's respects to the late Dalai Lama. This mission, headed by General Huang Mu-sung of the National Military Council,[1] was a major attempt to reassert Chinese authority over Tibet.

BACKGROUND

Chinese policy after the overthrow of the Manchus in 1911 continued the Manchu notion of an empire comprised of the Han people and the four minority nationalities: the Tibetans, the Manchus, the Mongolians, and the Moslems of Sinkiang. The Nationalist government's inauguration in October 1928 did not change this policy even though Manchuria, Outer Mongolia, and Tibet were operating independently, and many individual provinces such as Sinkiang were ruled semi-

1. The official Chinese government appointment order in the *National Government Gazette* (no. 1335 of 13 January 1934) reads: "Huang Mu-sung is hereby appointed Special Commissioner to proceed and offer sacrifices to the Great Priest, protector of State, Propagator of Culture, Spacious in Benevolence, Perfect in Immaculate Intelligence, the Dalai Lama" (translation from F0371/18105).

independently by powerful militarists. Not surprisingly, one of Chiang Kai-shek's primary aims was the reunification of China.[2] Tibet therefore was from the beginning considered by Chiang to be an integral part of the new Chinese Republic, and he established a Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs in 1928.[3]

The 13th Dalai Lama's disenchantment with Tsarong and the pro-British military officers created a favorable climate for Chinese overtures which did not go unnoticed in China. In late 1929, Chiang initiated contact with the 13th Dalai Lama through Köncho Chungnay, the Tibetan abbot of the Yunggün monastery in Peking,[4] who was returning to Tibet with two other Tibetan officials.[5] He also separately sent Liu Man-ch'ing, a young woman who worked as a translator at the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs, as an unofficial envoy with orders to report to Chiang on the situation there. She arrived in Lhasa on 7 February 1930.[6]

The Dalai Lama, indicating his interest in Chiang's initiative, granted Liu a private audience at which she conveyed Chiang's "deep

2. Clubb 1978: 149–51.

3. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, H. E. Richardson, Précis, 1945: 36–37.

4. The monastery's name is really Yunghogün, but Tibetans say Yunggün. It contained about 100 Manchu, Han, and Mongolian monks who, though they did not know how to speak Tibetan, knew how to read their Tibetan prayer books. The Yunggün abbot was always appointed by the Dalai Lama from the geshes of Sera Mey and Che colleges in Lhasa. (Thub bstan sangs rgyas (Thubten Sanggye) 1982: 11–12.) Surkhang (interview) commented that the abbot was chosen alternately from the Mey and the Che colleges of Sera.

5. Li 1956: 152 (data cited from Shih Ch'ing-yang ms.). The other officials were part of the Khendrönlosum, the permanent mission consisting of three monk officials sent to Peking by the Tibetan government. Their task was to teach the Tibetan language to the Manchu royal family and to the young monks of the Yunggün monastery. The name derives from the titles of the three officials: the senior teacher was a *khen*cung (fourth rank); the junior teacher was a tsen*drön* (fifth rank); and the third official was *lo*tsawa or translator and was also usually a fifth-rank official, although a monk from the Three Seats was used if a government official could not be found who knew Chinese. These three officials were formally enrolled as members of the Yunggün monastery in Peking and received shares of income like the regular monks. These officials were expected to wait in a particular room at the Palace for anyone who might want lessons in Tibetan. They also assisted in training young monks in the Yunggün monastery (Thub bstan sangs rgyas (Thubten Sanggye) 1982: 10–12.) Thubten Sanggye is a monk official who served as a member of the Khendrönlosum.

6. Li 1956: 151. Liu had been born in Lhasa of a Tibetan mother and Chinese father and spoke Tibetan fluently. Her account is taken from the book she wrote about her mission, cited in Li 1956 and 1960.

concern . over the prevailing conditions in Tibet and his eager wish to see Tibet rejoin the family of the Republic as brothers."[7] She later wrote that the Dalai Lama had shown her unusual courtesy by blessing her with his hands rather than with a tassel and had said:

> Since President Chiang had Tibet in mind and had sent you here shortly after the establishment of the new government to express concern for and sympathy toward Tibet, I am deeply touched and would like to ask you to convey personally my appreciation and gratitude. . . . I am looking forward to a day of mutual aid. What I expect most of China is real unity and peace.[8]

She wrote that the Dalai Lama said he

> wished to see the corrupt and adventurous [Chinese] civil and military officers [in Eastern Tibet] removed and replaced by some honest and well-intentioned men who would work for the mutual interest of the two peoples. He was confident that the Tibet-Sikang [Eastern Tibet] question would be easily settled in a conference if the [Chinese] central government would consolidate its own position and make such a change of the personnel on the spot. He said he was ready to withdraw Tibetan troops at any moment.[9]

The essence of the Chinese initiative was contained in the written communication that arrived in Lhasa on 16 January 1930 in the hands of the abbot of Yunggün monastery. In this letter Chiang suggested that the time was right for China and Tibet to settle their differences.[10]

7. Li 1956: 151 (from Liu Man-ch'ing 1933).

8. Ibid. She also said that the Dalai Lama spoke negatively about the British: "The British, indeed, have a mind to draw me to their side. Nevertheless, I know the importance of guarding the national sovereignty and I have never surrendered a bit of it in spite of the necessity of having to deal with them, their character and customs being so different from our own." (ibid.) Note should be taken that while this fits the general Tibetan show of friendship with the Chinese, it is obvious that she either misunderstood the Dalai Lama or misrepresented him when she presents him as talking of "national sovereignty" as though he accepted Tibet as a part of the sovereign Chinese state. As we can see even from Chiang Kai-shek's letter cited just below, this was not the case.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid. 152. Li uses "central government" in all his translations from Chinese documents and texts. While this may well be how the Chinese officials translated the Tibetan text, it is inconceivable that the Tibetan government at that time would have used such a term, since they clearly did not in the least consider themselves a "local" government. "Central government" should be consistently read simply as "China."

He tried to open a dialogue by raising eight points aimed at clarifyi what Tibetans felt they needed in order to restore amicable relatio with China. These eight points, with the Dalai Lama's responses, a cited below.

1. Q. How might relations between Tibet and the Central Government be restored?

A. If the Central Government[11] would treat the patronage relationship between China and Tibet with sincerity and good faith as it previously did,[12] Tibet on its part, having always shown sincerity in its dealings in the past, would from now on make an even greater effort to give full support to the Central Government.

2. Q. How shall the Central Government exercise administrative control over Tibet?

A. It would be advisable to work out a written understanding on the measures to be taken for securing a fundamental stabilization both in the political and the religious affairs of Tibet.

3. Q. How shall the autonomy of Tibet and its scope be defined?

A. As from now on, the patronage relationship between the Central Government and Tibet is going to be faithfully observed and the Central Government is to show sincerity to make Tibet feel safe and secure; the area over which autonomy is to be exercised should naturally be the same as before. *It is expected that the Central Government will return to Tibet those districts which originally belonged to it but which are now not under its control* so that a perpetual peace and harmony will surely be the result.

4. Q. Shall the Dalai and Panch'en Lamas join the Kuomintang?

A. On account of his advanced age and the tremendous burden in managing temporal and religious affairs, and also considering the fact that he is not able to proceed to the capital until the consent of the three leading monasteries and of the members of the National Assembly is obtained, the Dalai Lama is not at the present time in a position to join the Kuomintang. As the Panch'en Lama is now residing in China Proper and his duty has always been confined to the religious affairs of Tashilhunpo, for he has no political affairs to attend to, he should be available

11. Again, the Dalai Lama would not have used "Central Government" in his rep

12. This is obviously a reference to the priest-patron concept adhered to by the T betans (discussed in Chapter 1).

for membership of the Kuomintang. It must be understood, however, that he has never had any say in the settlement of Tibetan affairs.

5. Q. Shall the relative position of the Dalai and the Panch'en Lama and their respective jurisdiction in political as well as religious affairs be maintained as before or new provisions be made?

A. Political and religious affairs have always been administered by the Tibetan Government at Lhasa. The Panch'en Lama has had only the Tashi-lhunpo monastery in his control. Actually the Tashi-lhunpo monastery was built by the first Dalai Lama. It was the second Dalai Lama who entrusted the administration to a fellow monk and conferred upon the latter the honorary title of Panch'en, when he moved his seat to Lhasa. Later, in view of the tutor-disciple relationship existing in turn through generations between the Dalai and the Panch'en, the fifth Dalai Lama awarded this monastery to the fourth Panch'en Lama. If this age-old practice were to be continuously observed, all Tibetans would be only too pleased.

6. Q. How shall the Dalai welcome the Panch'en back to Tibet and how shall the Central Government escort him?

A. Among the Panch'en's retinue, many employed the terms "Anterior" and "Ulterior" Tibet [Ü and Tsang] with intent to sow discord. They disobeyed orders of the Tibetan Government and acted frequently against their superiors. Both their thought and conduct are corrupt. In the year Chia Ch'en (1904), the Panch'en went to India and conspired with the British, but all his efforts were of no avail. In the year Hsin hai (1911), he intrigued with the Resident (Amban) Lien-yu and made an attempt to seize the reins of government and control of the church during the absence of the Dalai Lama. But his efforts were thwarted by the opposition of the people and especially of the clergymen of the three leading monasteries. According to established practice, the Panch'en should contribute one quarter of the provisions for the Army. Not only did he fail to make such contributions, but also committed acts in violation of law. Had the offenders been punished strictly in accordance with the letter of the law, there would have been no such state of affairs as now exists. It is only in consideration of the long-standing and close tutor-disciple relationship between the Dalai and the Panch'en through generations that a policy of tolerance and forgiveness has been followed. Yet these people not only remained unrepentant, but further advised and urged the Panch'en to flee away from Tashi-lhunpo. A dispatch inviting him back was soon sent to the Panch'en, but he refused to accept. He

then fled to Urga and had secret dealing with the communists. Only upon the death of the Chief Lama of Mongolia, Cheputsuntanpa, was he obliged to come to China Proper. Consequently, the Tibetan Government dispatched officials to Tashi-lhunpo to take proper care of the monastery. Now, these offenders are still conspiring and making trouble. As the matter stands, Tibet would find it very difficult to welcome them unless they can give a satisfactory explanation as to their reason for taking to flight.

7. Q. Has the Dalai Lama the intention of setting up in the Capital an office for the convenience of keeping closer contact? As to its expenses, the Central Government is prepared to grant the necessary funds.

A. At first, offices are to be set up in Nanking, Peiping, and Sikang [Western Szechuan]. If and when such offices are required for other places, applications will be filed accordingly.

8. Q. Is there anything else that Tibet expects of the Central Government?

A. For the purpose of protecting itself against aggression, Tibet's hope for the present is only that the Central Government will supply it with arms. In case any other help may be needed in the future for strengthening its security, it will make requests to the Central Government.[13]

The Dalai Lama's answers paralleled the Tibetan position taken a the Simla Conference seventeen years earlier: Tibet was willing to com promise on the issue of independence and accept some sort of nomina subordination to China, so long as it was actually autonomous. And, a

13. Li 1956: 153–55 (emphasis added). Li derived the eight points (and answers from the manuscript of Shih Ch'ing-yang, chairman of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affair Commission, who in turn copied them word for word from the Chinese translation o the original Tibetan in the commission's archives. Thubten Sanggye, an official in th Tibetan Bureau in China after 1936, also mentions the exchange in his book (Thub bsta sangs rgyas 1982: 17–19), although he appears to err in saying that there were ten point in Chiang's letter. He, however, mentioned only five points: (1) the Chinese governmen was to pay the salary for the Dalai Lama and all Tibetan officers; (2) the Chinese govern ment was to pay the salary of the army and provide whatever weapons are needed; (3 the Chinese government would help Tibet if it were invaded by a foreign country; (4 the Dalai Lama should join the Kuomintang party; (5) the Tibetans should establis offices in important places such as Nanking, Peking, and Tachienlu. Of these five, th latter three correspond to Li's version and the first two may be a garbled reference t Chiang's point 7.

in 1914, Tibet demanded control over the ethnically Tibetan areas in the Eastern Tibetan–Szechuan borderlands between China and Tibet.

The Chinese initiative, however, produced two important new developments. First, the Tibetans no longer demanded that the British be involved in the negotiations or that they act as guarantors of any final decision between China and Tibet. This provision had been a major obstacle to rapprochement after the failure of the Simla Conference. Second, the Dalai Lama restored official relations with China. He agreed to transform the Khendrönlosum structure (the two monk-official teachers and their interpreter) into a bureau office that could deal with the Chinese government and to set up offices in Nanking, Peking, and Tachienlu (Sikang). In 1931, he reappointed the Yunggün abbot Köncho Chungnay as head of this mission and sent him back to China, with Tsendrön Ngawang Gyentsen and Chömpel Thubten, to head the Tibet Bureau Office.[14]

The Chinese attempt to settle the status and future of the Panchen Lama, however, met with an unyielding negative. The Dalai Lama was clearly unwilling to yield any of his authority and power to the renegade Tashilhunpo officials or to the Panchen Lama.

The Sino-Tibetan atmosphere remained cordial, even to the extent that a dispute over the name of the new Tibetan office in China was satisfactorily resolved. The Chinese initially referred to the office as the Dalai's Bureau, an analogue of the Panchen's Bureau, the office of the Panchen Lama in China. The Tibetan government, however, insisted that the name of their office should reflect that, unlike the Panchen's, it was an official office of the Tibetan government. The Chinese finally agreed to call it the *Tibet* Bureau Office (Shitsang Benhre Tru'u).[15]

The Chinese government apparently contemplated following up their initiative with a conference in Nanking, but instead sent Hsieh Kuo-liang to open negotiations with the Dalai Lama. Hsieh, however, died before reaching Lhasa; his subordinates returned to China with the undelivered proposal.[16] This proposal was later found in the records

14. Thub bstan sangs rgyas (Thubten Sanggye) 1982: 20–21, 29.
15. Ibid.: 29–30.
16. Li 1960: 157.

of the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs in Nanking. terms reveal just how far apart the two sides were in regard to the tv basic issues of Chinese control over Tibet and territorial readjustmei on the Sino-Tibetan frontier. It proposed that:

> 1. Tibet should restore its close relationship with the Central Government.
> 2. Tibet should not foster any political relations with any foreign state.
> 3. All treaties and agreements still in force between Tibet and foreign states should be submitted to the National Government for reexamination.
> 4. The Dalai Lama should welcome the Panch'en Lama back to Tibet.
> 5. *The Dalai Lama should restore to the National Government all the districts of Sikang which he had occupied.*
> 6. *Important diplomatic, military, and political affairs of Tibet should be the responsibility of, and administered by, the National Government.*
> 7. The National Government should grant Tibet the right to complete autonomy.
> 8. The secular and religious authority of the Dalai and the Panch'en Lamas should be maintained as before.
> 9. The National Government should appoint a special commissioner to be stationed in Tibet "to conduct Tibetan affairs."
> 10. Tibet might set up an office in Nanking and the National Government should make an appropriation for the expenses of that office.[17]

Thus, aside from the acceptance of autonomy, the Kuomintang pı sented totally unrealistic terms, requiring Tibet to return ethnic Tibet (Khamba) areas, allow the stationing of a Chinese commissioner Lhasa, and defer to China on military and foreign affairs. Moreov the Chinese wanted the Dalai Lama to "welcome" back the Panch Lama and restore his secular and religious authority, although the Da Lama had made clear his opposition to this and his rejection of the id that the Panchen Lama had ever had "secular authority." In a sense, the negotiations were unrealistic; even had the Dalai Lama been an nable and Chiang Kai-shek been willing to make territorial concessio

17. Li 1960: 156, cited from Shih Ch'ing-yang ms. (emphasis added).

in Kham, in fact Chiang did not control the border provinces of Szechuan (with Sikang) or Tsinghai and thus probably could not have implemented any territorial adjustments in these areas.

Whatever potential remained for a sino-Tibetan agreement was eliminated when fighting broke out in the ethnic Tibetan area of Kanze in Chinese-controlled Kham, for this soon escalated into the Sino-Tibetan war of 1930–1932.

THE SINO-TIBETAN CONFLICT IN KHAM, 1930–1932

The dispute began when the chief of Beri seized the estates of the incarnate lama of Nyarong monastery in Beri, forcing the lama to stay in Targye monastery in a different principality. The Chinese commander-in-chief of Sikang at this time, the semi-autonomous General Liu Wen-hui, supported the chief of Beri,[18] as did the Panchen Lama's officials, who were thought to be inciting the chief.[19]

In June 1930, the Nyarong Lama and monks from Targye monastery seized possession of Nyarong monastery. The Beri chief then sought assistance from General Liu, whose troops took control of the area. The Targye monks responded by asking Lhasa to deploy the Tibetan border troops in Kham in their aid. The Tibetan governor-general sent a Tibetan force from Derge that engaged the Chinese and drove them out of Beri and large parts of Kanze District.

In October, the Dalai Lama sent a telegram to the Chinese government blaming the followers of the Panchen Lama for the problem. General Liu Wen-hui told Chiang Kai-shek that the fighting was, on the contrary, the fault of the Tibetan government, who had sent reinforcements to assist the Targye monks. In the midst of the charges and countercharges, the Dalai Lama asked Chiang to send a team of mediators to the troubled area since, he said, he could no longer trust or deal with Liu. Chiang agreed and sent T'ang Ko-san and Liu Tsan-ting. Meanwhile the Tibetan officials in the area continued to fight. In March

18. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 300.
19. Li (1960: 157) states that the dispute derived from Nyarong Tulku's desire to incorporate Beri monastery into Targye monastery.

1931, before the Chinese negotiators arrived, they badly defeated the Chinese forces and continued to push eastward toward Nyarong, large and important area in Kham.

The Chinese angrily telegraphed the Dalai Lama asking for an explanation. He replied on 24 March 1931 that cease-fire orders were being sent but would take several weeks to reach the site of the fighting. The Tibetan troops therefore continued to push eastward, capturing substantial amounts of territory east of the Upper Yangtse, including Kanze and Nyarong. At one point they were only a few days away from Tachienlu.

These successes were short-lived. Liu Wen-hui regrouped his forces and counterattacked, and by the end of 1931 the tide had turned. By May 1932 the Tibetan forces had been driven out of Kanze and Nyarong, and by July they had lost important areas such as Derge, which Tibet had held since 1919. Soon afterward they were forced to pull back to the Yangtse River itself. This string of Tibetan defeats raised the spectre of a complete rout and a repeat of the 1910 Chinese military invasion of Lhasa. The situation further deteriorated when the forces of the Moslem Warlord of Sining, Ma Pu-fang, began fighting with the Tibetans in the Nangchen-Jyekundo area northwest of Chamdo, creating a second front.[20]

In August 1932, the Dalai Lama in desperation turned to the British, asking them to pressure the Chinese government to terminate the fighting. He offered the British a secret treaty that would provide for British intervention in the border dispute, and invited J. L. K. Weir, the British political officer in Sikkim, to visit Lhasa.[21] The British refused to conclude any new treaty with Tibet but did make representations to the Chinese Foreign Office regarding cessation of hostilities in Kham. The Chinese were informed that Britain was concerned about the integrity of Outer Tibet and about the maintenance of a stable Tibetan government. Britain also offered to work to reach a solution to the conflict

20. Shakabpa 1967: 267–70; IOR, L/PS/20/D222, H. E. Richardson, Précis, 1945: 40–45; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 300; Li 1960: 157.

21. The Dalai Lama also made inquiries regarding the possibility of obtaining help from the League of Nations, the United States, and Japan (IOR, L/PS/20/D222, H. E. Richardson, Précis, 1945: 43–44).

but said it would "take a very serious view of the matter" if China pushed beyond the Yangtse River to take Chamdo.[22]

The Japanese military takeover of Manchuria after the Mukden incident of 18 September 1931 and their establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo on 1 March 1932 shifted the focus of the Nationalist government away from Tibet and persuaded Chiang that it would be unwise to be embroiled in a war with Tibet that could alienate Britain. He therefore instructed Liu to cease his attacks. However, Liu was more or less autonomous, so the order might have had little impact had not Liu's nephew, General Liu Hsiang in Chungking, attacked Liu Wen-hui's forces in Szechuan. As a consequence, the senior Liu withdrew a large part of his forces and agreed to a truce in Kham.[23]

On 10 October 1932, Liu and the Tibetan leaders in Kham signed a truce in which it was agreed that the Tibetan forces would remain west of the Yangtse River and the Chinese would remain east of it.[24] The Chinese westward march was stopped, but Tibet had lost Derge, a very rich and important Khamba region. The river remained the de facto border between Tibet and China until October 1950, when the troops of the People's Liberation Army crossed it and took Chamdo and the rest of Tibetan-held Kham. In June 1933, a truce had also been signed with Ma Pu-fang of Tsinghai.[25] These truces ended the immediate threat of an invasion of Central Tibet but only reinforced the Dalai Lama's conviction that without a mutually determined settlement of the Sino-Tibetan question Tibet could not rest easy. Nevertheless, in the remaining year or so before the 13th Dalai Lama's death, no further progress was made toward such a settlement.

The death of the strong-willed, autocratic, and fiercely independent 13th Dalai Lama created new conditions that to the Chinese seemed promising for the restoration of what China considered its traditional superordination over Tibet. The fall of Lungshar, an official whom the Chinese saw as one of their main enemies, enhanced this promise. The

22. Ibid.
23. Li 1960: 164.
24. Ibid. It should be noted that this truce was signed only by local officials and not by the Chinese central government.
25. Li 1960: 164.

Huang mission, therefore, was intended to test whether Tibetan intransigence regarding the Eastern Tibet border and subordinate political status had diminished following the death of the 13th Dalai Lama.

From the Tibetan point of view, the de facto independence Tibet had enjoyed since 1913 had been extremely costly. The Tibetan government was bled dry by the need to maintain a large contingent of troops in Eastern Tibet; and the economic and political requisites of this maintenance, as mentioned earlier, were threatening the internal stability of the traditional religion-based system. More immediately disturbing were the massive failure of the Tibetan army in Eastern Tibet in 1931–1932 and the fear that in a sudden renewal of fighting the entire Eastern front would collapse. Thus many officials and monastic leaders saw rapprochement with China as desirable.

On the other hand, the interregnum government's prime responsibility was to preserve the integrity of Tibet by maintaining it as it had been before the Dalai Lama died. This in essence meant following the terms of the Simla Convention. Huang Mu-sung's visit was therefore awaited in Lhasa with both hope and trepidation.

THE HUANG MISSION

The Huang condolence mission was aimed at inducing Tibet to admit it was one of the five races (ethnic groups) that made up the new Republic of China, by emphasizing the commonalities between China and Tibet as opposed to the alien British. By showing concern and reverence for Tibetan Buddhism (as the Manchu rulers of China had done) and for Tibetan customs and institutions, particularly the monasteries, the mission hoped to create an atmosphere of friendship that would set the stage for future Sino-Tibetan relations. Consequently, Chiang allocated a small fortune for gifts and other expenses—400,000 Chinese silver dollars (*dayan*).[26]

Before Huang left China, the Chinese government settled on the following negotiating position:

26. Khung 1985: 143–46. Khung was a participant in the initial discussions in Nanking.

1. Concerning foreign relations, Tibet must accept inclusion into China. All important issues, therefore, would be internal [Chinese] issues and dealt with directly between Tibet and China without any "foreign" interference, i.e., without any British involvement. All previous treaties with foreign countries signed by Tibet but not ratified by China must be submitted to China for examination and decision.

2. Concerning political relations, Tibet is subordinate and Chinese administration and authority must be restored. China would have permanent officers in Tibet, and Tibet would send permanent representatives to China. The candidates for appointment to higher posts would again be approved by China. There would be complete freedom of trade and movement for Chinese in Tibet (and vice versa). If any political structures in Tibet were unallowable under Chinese law, they would be discussed in detail and plans would be made to reform them.

3. Concerning the eastern border: although the areas east of Giamda belonged to the Chinese province of Sikang at the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty, China would be willing to cede these areas to Tibet if Tibet would accept the first point, i.e., that it was a part of China. However, Chamdo, a critical center for trade and defense, would be retained as a part of China. If a settlement were reached, a stone pillar should immediately be set up to prevent future disputes.

4. Concerning military disposition: after the number of Tibetan troops were established, China would send instructors to train these troops, which would be responsible for maintaining peace in Tibet. They would come under the unified command of China, and all weapons and ammunition would come from China only.[27]

A small Chinese advance party headed by Wu Min-yuan, a translator for the Tibetan officials in China until 1929,[28] traveled by sea to India with Huang's gifts and arrived in Lhasa on 24 May 1934. The British

27. Ibid.
28. Thub bstan sangs rgyas (Thubten Sanggye) 1982: 31.

took note of this but did not immediately attempt to dispatch a parallel mission. Instead, they sent their Sikkim-born official Norbhu Döndup to Lhasa in April to monitor the Chinese.

In Tibet, the reception for the arrival of Huang became a bone of contention. The National Assembly had decided that an official of dzasa rank would meet Huang three days out from Lhasa; the two Lhasa magistrates would meet him six miles from the city; and a reception tent would be erected two miles outside the city, where 6 junior officials with an honor guard of about 300 soldiers and police would greet him.[29] This was more than the Tibetan government had done for the visits of the British political officers, but Wu expressed dissatisfaction with the plan, telling the shapes that Huang was the most important person in China after Chiang Kai-shek and that at the very least all the shapes should go out to receive him.[30]

The regent, the lönchen, and the Kashag (see Figure 25) met to discuss Huang's reception but ended by referring the matter to the National Assembly. After several days the assembly finally agreed to increase the magnitude of the reception: representatives of the regent, the lönchen, and the Kashag would go out four miles and offer ceremonial scarves; the newly appointed Bönshö Shape and all dzasas and fourth-rank officials would receive Huang in a tent with light refreshments one mile outside the city;[31] and an honor guard of 675 troops would meet Huang a mile from Lhasa.[32]

Wu further requested that the Kashag decorate a large hall for the presentation of a posthumous medal for the Dalai Lama. He also asked for a list of all the Tibetan government officials with their ranks and offices, ostensibly for gift-giving and entertaining. The Kashag again referred these requests to the National Assembly, which decided that it

29. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 15 August 1934.

30. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 22 August 1934.

31. By contrast, in 1920 when Sir Charles Bell arrived in Lhasa at the invitation of the Dalai Lama, he was met two miles outside Lhasa only by delegates of the Dalai Lama, the lönchens, and the Kashag, the latter being represented only by the young Shatra (Bell 1946: 222).

32. This was basically all the troops then in Lhasa with the exception of a small unit that had recently returned from Eastern Tibet under the command of Shankawa.



25.

The four shapes in 1936: (left to right) Trentong, Bonsho, Tregang, Langcunga (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

would be inappropriate to accept a posthumous medal or title. It also decided to give the Chinese the total number of government officials, but not their names and ranks.[33]

In the meantime, throughout Lhasa the Chinese posted notices in Chinese and Tibetan that merely alluded to Tibet as an integral part of China, while expressing the utmost reverence for the Dalai Lama and religion. A British translation of the text of the notice reads:

> The precious Dalai Lama who was the ruler of the kingdom, immeasurable in mercy, omniscient, the ensurer of comfort of all sentient beings, having departed from this world, I Tron Hri [Huang Mu-sung], have been specially deputed to make religious offerings for his benefit and am

33. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 27 August 1934.

at the same time empowered to issue the following notification on behalf of the Government.

In every respect the relations between the five nations of the empire are like those of the members of a family. The thirteenth incarnation of the Dalai Lama, who was dispenser of mercy and efficient ruler of the snowy kingdom, had appeared among us. The effects of his 3000 different kinds of good deeds had spread among all living beings. He was the protector of the kingdom and savior of all sentient beings—gods and all human beings bowing down before him and offering oblations. The [Chinese] Government, taking all the good qualities of the Dalai Lama into consideration, made everything prosperous and happy in the west [Tibet]. The five nations unanimously desired that comfort, prosperity, happiness and glory should be secured to the empire. While this was going on, the precious being took his departure from this world, an incident which has put us everyone into mourning. Therefore it has become necessary that all possible religious ceremonies should be performed. It is on account of this that I have been specially deputed on this mission by the Chinese Government. The actual personality of the protector and the omniscient one has not disappeared; it is still visible like the dew drops on the Yen Tara flower. It is therefore most fervently hoped that his re-incarnation should appear very soon and that he should again guide the destiny of the Buddhist faith. This should be borne in mind by all the people of Tibet, lay and clergy. In deference to the wishes of the Chinese Government, all possible religious ceremonies should be performed. Let the cause of the Buddhist faith flourish. Reliance should be placed on the Chinese Government, who can ensure the comfort and happiness (of all) for ever. Bear this in mind.

By Tron Hri Huan Mu-sung[34]

The Huang Mission of about eighty people, including officers, staff members, bodyguards, and palanquin bearers, arrived in Lhasa on 28 August. Huang's first two to three weeks were spent in courtesy calls during which he studiously avoided any political discussion. In order to create a favorable climate for Sino-Tibetan relations, he traveled to the Jokhang and other holy temples, exhibiting piety by touching the various thrones of the Dalai Lamas with his forehead and bowing down

34. Ibid.

before all shrines. He visited the regent, the lönchen, the shapes, and lesser but important officials. To all he presented large gifts of tea, silk, and other valuables. Finally, he went to each of the great monasteries around Lhasa and again distributed substantial gifts; for example, each of the roughly 20,000 monks in the Three Seats was given two Chinese silver dollars (*dayan*) as alms. At that time the Chinese obtained permission to use a wireless set they had brought to communicate with Nanking.[35]

Huang did not want to discuss political issues until the Tibetans agreed to a condolence and memorial ceremony and the presentation of the posthumous medal. The Kashag again refused the medal, Trimön saying that the time was inauspicious to hold a ceremony since the officials and the people were in mourning. He suggested waiting until the new Dalai Lama was discovered.[36] Huang persisted, repeatedly sending staff members to attempt to persuade the Kashag. The Kashag finally referred the matter to the National Assembly, which also recommended that the title not be accepted. Huang personally visited the four shapes, who then requested that the National Assembly have the Chinese inscription on the medal translated into Tibetan.[37]

The British political officer in Sikkim had obtained a copy of the inscription from Norbhu Döndup and had had the India Foreign Office translate it into English. It said only:

> (a) on the inner face of the cover: Chinese Republic. 23rd year. memorial devotion of the Mission of condolence for the great teacher, the Dalai Lama.
>
> Presented by Huang Mu Sung, specially appointed commissioner to convey condolence.
>
> (b) On revolving disk of decoration:—Decoration in memory of Special Commissioner Huang Mu Sung's mission of condolence for the late

35. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 16 September 1934.

36. Khung 1985: 131–32; IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 6 October 1934.

37. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, report of Norbhu Döndup, cited in a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 6 October 1934. At this time the four Shapes were Trimön, Langcunga, Tregang, and Bönshö.

> great teacher, protector of his country, diffuser of transforming influences, of all pervading [*sic*] compassion.[38]

After having a Tibetan translation made, the National Assembly finally agreed to accept the medal as well as a jade slab with an inscription that read: "To the renowned 13th Dalai Lama, who protects the living creatures of the snowy country and in whom we [the Chinese] trust as the real Buddha. This is offered by the Chinese Republican Government."[39] However, when Huang asked for an elaborate procession to carry the two seals on small palanquins from his residence to the Potala Palace with all the officials in Lhasa as an escort, the Tibetan government refused. Huang again insisted and the Kashag finally agreed to a procession in which the Chinese themselves would carry the seals on a palanquin to the Potala, where Tibetan troops would present arms. After that, Tibetan officials above the sixth rank would receive Huang at the throne of the Dalai Lama, and Huang would turn the articles over to the Chigyab Khembo, who would place them on the late Dalai Lama's table.[40]

The Tibetan government, then, while wary of Chinese motives and intentions, was being careful not to insult the Chinese, for fear of losing this opportunity to settle Sino-Tibetan differences.

Huang now began political discussions. On 17 September, he invited the four shapes to his office and raised the issue of Sino-Tibetan relations.[41] The Tibetan point of view at this time was expressed succinctly by Trimön Shape and Langcunga Shape in separate conversations with Norbhu Döndup, a few days before Huang arrived.

> They both told him [Norbhu Döndup] that they did not know the exact object of the Chinese Mission but that, if Sino-Tibetan relations were seriously discussed, the Tibetan Government proposed to take their stand on the Simla Convention of 1914. They said that, if the mission

38. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from the deputy secretary, Government of India, Foreign and Political Department, to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 20 October 1934.

39. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, report of Norbhu Döndup, cited in a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 6 October 1934.

40. Ibid. Khung's dates are one day earlier than those of Norbhu Döndup and have been altered to coincide with his since Norbhu's letters were written at the time the events took place and are unlikely to be incorrect.

41. Khung 1985: 146.

> pressed the Tibetan Government to allow an Amban to be posted to Lhasa, the Tibetan Government would probably agree, provided that there was no attempt to interfere with the autonomy of Tibet. This latter would be insisted on under all circumstances.
>
> Tri-mon Sha-pe remarked that the Chinese would probably object to the Simla Convention, particularly as they did not like to admit that the British had any concern with Tibet. He also said that, when Colonel Weir was in Lhasa in 1932, he had told the Tibetan Government that the Chinese refused to discuss Tibetan affairs with the British Government as intermediary, and that he advised them to settle matters direct with China if possible. I do not know whether Colonel Weir actually said this. Advice to settle the frontier question direct was also conveyed by me to the Dalai Lama in March 1933. . . . Our attitude has probably led Tibet to believe that we can do little or nothing to help her. Lang Chung-nga Sha-pe, however, said that, if the independence of Tibet were threatened, the Tibetan Government would undoubtedly appeal to us.[42]

At Huang's meeting with the shapes, Trimön spoke of Sino-Tibetan relations from the time of the T'ang dynasty (seventh to ninth century A.D.), pointing out that relations had been excellent during the T'ang dynasty but that they had deteriorated recently, due to conflict on the Kham border. He told Huang that if China did not want the British as guarantor to a settlement, they should accept Tibet's willingness to live by the terms of the treaty laid down by Tang ka'o san and Khyungram (the cease-fire agreement of 1932) or Tibet's willingness to use a different country as guarantor.[43]

Huang replied that Sino-Tibetan relations and the border delimitation were all *internal* matters and of no concern to foreign nations, and he repeated the new Chinese position that the border dispute was linked to the overall nature of Sino-Tibetan relations. Huang evaded Trimön's question concerning China's position regarding Tibet and instead asked for a written reply listing the conditions Tibetans felt were necessary to create good relations. This reply, Huang said, would serve as the basis for further discussion.[44]

42. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, report of Norbhu Döndup, cited in a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 29 August 1934.
43. Khung, 1985: 148.
44. Ibid.: 148–49.

At this first diplomatic meeting the shapes also raised the issue of the Panchen Lama. They complained to Huang that though they wanted the Panchen to return by sea (via India) without a large escort, the Panchen was ignoring their wishes and proposing to come overland with a large contingent of troops. Huang assured the shapes that he had recently met with the Panchen Lama, who had no intention of fighting the Tibetan government troops. Moreover, Huang said that the Panchen Lama needed only a small escort. He promised to verify this by wireless.[45]

After this meeting, a series of discussions were held and communiqués exchanged. On 24 September, one week after the medal presentation ceremony in the Potala, the Kashag sent Huang the written reply he had requested. It stated once again that the border dispute was the most critical issue but said nothing at all about the political status of Tibet vis-à-vis China.[46]

Huang replied in writing, encouraging the Tibetans to write a clear reply to his question about their conditions for rapprochement, and continued to meet with officials to try to persuade them to respond to the political issue. In early October the four shapes paid a formal visit to Huang and presented him with a letter that once again made no mention of future Sino-Tibetan relations. It only talked at some length about the priest-patron relationship of the time of the 5th Dalai Lama. Moreover, the letter continued to express the Tibetan position that China should return a number of ethnic Tibetan territories it occupied in Kham and Amdo such as Derge, Kanze, and Golok.[47] Implicit was the point that if China really wanted to be considered a friend (and "patron"), it would return the disputed border territories to Tibet.

The next day, Huang Mu-sung again went to see Trimön and yet again told him that it would be very hard to achieve a settlement of the border issue in accordance with the Tibetan position. He asked specifically whether Tibet would sincerely cooperate with (i.e., join) the new Chinese Republic and urged him to specify what kind of political rela-

45. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 6 October 1934. Although Khung does not mention any discussion about the Panchen Lama, this was one of the foremost concerns of the Tibetans and was certain to have been broached by them.
46. Khung 1985: 149.
47. Ibid.

tionship with China Tibet wanted. Trimön responded that if Tibet participated in the Republic, it would want complete power to deal with external issues and would want to maintain the priest-patron relationship as in the past, that is, to exercise total autonomy internally. Trimön also reiterated that Tibet hoped the border issue could be settled quickly.[48]

A few days later, Huang sent his second written reply to the Kashag. It restated the Chinese position and again asked for a clear specification of the kind of relationship Tibet wanted with China. To avoid misunderstanding, Huang had this letter translated into Tibetan.[49]

The Kashag again brought these issues before the National Assembly, which discussed them for two days in mid-October. Huang had in the meantime let it be known that if the Tibetan government became a part of the new Chinese Republic, the border dispute could be settled amicably and China would support Tibet against all outside invaders. Huang also indicated that if the assembly agreed to China's terms, he would leave with them an official who would teach the Tibetans the new customs of the Republican government. On the other hand, he warned that if the Panchen Lama, now a strong supporter of the Republic with many arms and troops, tried to return to Tibet using force of arms, the Chinese government would not be able to stop him unless Tibet was a part of the Republic.

Despite this, the National Assembly for the third time rejected joining the Republic. Only about six junior officials spoke in favor of the Chinese proposal. During the course of the debate, Ringang, one of the four Tibetan boys who had been educated in England under Lungshar's chaperonage, pointed out that, like Britain, Japan was strong, but, unlike Britain, it was Buddhist and nearby, and Tibet could profit by seeking that country's help in resisting the Chinese. This suggestion was not taken seriously by the leadership; most of the assembly members were merely amused.[50]

On 17 October Huang was informed of the assembly's final response. It said that Tibet was a Buddhist land and that the dual reli-

48. Ibid.: 151–53.
49. Ibid.: 149–50.
50. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 10 November 1934.

gious-political government must be continued. Changing to a Republican political-legal system would be incompatible with this type of government. The assembly also declared that because Tibet was a self-governing, independent country (*rangda gyekab*), there was no reason for China to interfere in its affairs or to station civil and military officials in Lhasa. It also asked once again for the return of the Amdo and Kham borderlands. The response ended with a more moderate but vague statement that if Tibet's wishes were respected, Tibet and China could present a unified face to the outside world based on the traditional priest-patron relationship, and it indicated that Tibet would be willing to send representatives to Nanking but, as at present, China must treat Tibet as a foreign country.[51] Tibet, it said, had been ruled by the Dalai Lamas and would fight to the last man to preserve its religious government.[52]

This strong statement by the assembly did not deter Huang, who concluded that it was the term *republic* that had dismayed the Tibetans. Consequently, a little over a week later, Huang and several members of his staff tried to reconcile the shapes to this term. Huang explained that there was no necessary contradiction between being a Republic and the Tibetan dual religious-secular system of government. China, he said, had no thought whatsoever of changing Tibet.[53] China only wanted Tibet to be one of the five races of the Chinese Republic. What was important was that Tibet "rely" on China. Huang reminded them again that the Panchen Lama had already joined the Republic and that if Tibet did not, the Panchen could possibly attack Tibet.[54] For two hours he went over what it would mean to be a part of the Chinese Republic. The shapes finally responded that there was no advantage to Tibet in joining the Republic, but, rather, considerable potential danger. They had to follow the National Assembly's recommendation and would neither join the Republic nor accept China's authority over Tibet.

Another version of this meeting is given by Norbhu Döndup. He

51. Khung 1985: 151–53.
52. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 10 November 1934.
53. Khung 1985: 153.
54. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 10 November 1934.

reported that Huang had stated that he would personally guarantee Chinese nonintervention in Tibetan internal matters and, critically, that China would surrender to Tibet the Tibetan territory she had taken, if Tibet would admit in writing her subordination to China. This was a considerable offer and the Kashag said they would discuss it at once with the assembly. Huang then said that because the assembly was filled with inexperienced people, the Kashag should warn them to consider this issue seriously.[55] Whichever version one accepts, it is clear that the assembly again rejected Huang's offer.

Huang informed Nanking of the stalemate and was instructed via wireless to return to China. He then asked the Kashag to issue him an official permit (*lamyik*) that would allow his staff to use corvée animals on the return journey, and he scheduled a departure audience for 11 November. These explicit plans for departure prompted the shapes to act. Realizing that Tibet had so far gained nothing from Huang's visit, they asked him to remain for a few more days, telling him that they still hoped that fruitful discussions on the question of future Sino-Tibetan relations could be held.[56]

Huang replied that before further discussions could be held they must agree to Tibet being a part of the Chinese Republic and must use the name of China in foreign affairs. He also reminded them that, as part of the Republic, Tibet could participate fully in Chinese political life, thereby influencing China's policies, while remaining autonomous in its own political system and internal affairs. Officers would, he continued, be sent from China to represent the central government, to oversee obedience to the laws of the central government, and to guide the exercise of local autonomy. The shapes asked Huang to put these terms in writing for submission to the National Assembly. Huang for the first time felt the shapes had shown an inclination to accept these terms and so he decided to make one last try.[57]

On 10 November, Huang sent his assistant to the Kashag with a detailed set of terms that he had drafted without the prior approval of Nanking. It contained a series of items of which two versions exist, one

55. Khung 1985: 153.
56. Ibid.: 154.
57. Ibid.: 154–55.

reported by Norbhu Döndup, the British-Indian officer then in Lha: and the other by Khung (a member of Huang's party) and Li.[58] The proposals were debated in the assembly for several days, and, accor ing to Norbhu Döndup, the following responses were offered by t Tibetans:

1. "The relations between the Central Government and the Tibetan Government should be those of benefactor and lama."

The Kashag accepted, provided "Chinese Government" was substituted for "Central Government" which was a new term. The Assembly agreed.

2. "The Chinese Government should always consider Tibet a holy and religious country."

Agreed.

3. "Tibet has religion, men and complete administrative arrangements. Therefore China should consider Tibet to be independent (?autonomous) and should not interfere in its internal administration."

Agreed.

4. "No Chinese troops should be kept on any of the frontiers."

Agreed.

5. "Five thousand troops should be selected from the Tibetan army and called Frontier Guards. They should be posted on the various frontiers. China should pay, arm, equip, and train the troops."

The Kashag said that the troops might be posted on the frontiers, but that there was no need to call them by any special name. They did not want pay or arms from the Chinese. The Assembly added that it was not necessary to post troops on the frontier until an emergency arose.

6. "A Chinese Officer should be posted at Lhasa to advise the Tibetan Government. He should be given an escort out of the Frontier Guards and should control the movements of the whole force."

The Kashag said they would prefer no Chinese officer to be posted at Lhasa. If one were appointed, he should have nothing to do with the Tibetan army, though he might have a small Chinese escort. The Simla Treaty had said 300.

7. "The Tibetan Government should consult the Chinese Government before corresponding with other nations about external relations."

The Kashag said that Tibet is independent and would deal with external affairs without consulting the Chinese. The Assembly agreed and

58. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, H. E. Richardson, Précis, 1945: 50–52; Khung 198 155; Li 1956: 169–70.

added that the Tibetan Government would correspond with all nations, "headed by the British Government," whenever they wished.

8. "The Chinese Government should be consulted about the appointment of officers of the rank of Shape and above."

The Kashag refused, but offered to inform the Chinese Government after the appointments had been made. The Assembly agreed to this.

9. "China should recognize the boundary existing at the time of the Emperor Kuang Hsu." (This appears to mean the boundary under the Manchu Empire before Chao Erh feng's conquests.)

This was considered favorable; but the Tibetan Government said that additional territory including Nyarong, Batang, Litang and the Golok country had to be turned over to them.

10. "China should fight with or mediate with any nations who try to invade Tibet."

The Kashag and Assembly said that as Tibet was a religious country no one was likely to attack her. If they did, she would deal with them herself, without Chinese help. The question of mutual help could be considered if it arose.

11. "China should be informed when the incarnation of the Dalai Lama is discovered so that she can offer him a seal and title."

The Kashag agreed. The National Assembly said that China should be informed only after the installation had taken place to avoid trouble such as was created in the case of the 6th and 7th Dalai Lamas. . . .

12. "The Tibetan Government should invite the Tashi Lama to return at once, should restore him to his former powers, estates and property, and should guarantee that no harm should be fall him or his followers. If this were done the Chinese Government would take away his munitions."

The Kashag and Assembly replied that the Tashi Lama, being a religious person, required no arms and ammunition. They would welcome him back to Tibet and guarantee his personal safety if the Chinese took away his arms. They added that he should be asked to return *via* India in accordance with the wishes of the late Dalai Lama.

13. "All Tibetan officers in China should receive salaries from the Chinese Government."

The Kashag agreed. The Assembly said that it was a matter of indifference to them, but that only officials especially appointed by the Tibetan Government should attend meetings.

14. "All half-Chinese in Tibet should be under the sole jurisdiction of the Chinese officer at Lhasa."

The Kashag and Assembly replied that, when the Chinese were

turned out of Tibet in 1912, the Tibetan Government asked all Chinese to return to China. Those born in Tibet asked for permission to remain, and signed an agreement to pay taxes and submit to Tibetan jurisdiction. This article was therefore unacceptable.[59]

The Li (in English) and Khung (in Tibetan) versions used the same official Chinese records but differ slightly. Whether this results simply from distortion due to translation is uncertain. On the whole, the Chinese versions report a somewhat different set of proposals than that reported by the British. Both Li and Khung indicate that Huang's proposal was prefaced with two fundamental points: (1) Tibet is unquestionably a part of the Republic of China; (2) Tibet must hold China in esteem. (Li writes: "must obey the Central Government").[60] Huang's proposal stated that these two points could not possibly harm either Tibet's religion or its government. Since the situation in Tibet was obviously different from that of China, internal conditions would be recognized and the wishes of the people taken into account. With regard to the Tibetan dual religious-secular government, the proposal said that the following points were necessary:

1. Tibet and China jointly held Buddhism in high esteem; Buddhism should be given protection and propagated.
2. The traditional political system would be continued and it was permissible for Tibet to have autonomy. China would not interfere with any administrative measures within the authority of the autonomy of Tibet. Foreign affairs required unitary action. All administrative matters that were nationwide in character were to be administered by China. For example, (a) Foreign affairs would be directed by the Chinese government. (b) National defense would be planned by the Chinese government. (c) Communications would be managed by the Chinese government. (d) The names of important officials of Tibet, after they had been nominated by the autonomous government of Tibet, would be

59. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, H. E. Richardson, Précis, 1945: 51–52.
60. Khung 1985: 155; Li 1956: 39. "Esteem" is a translation of the Tibetan *brtsi bkur.*

submitted to the Chinese government for their approval (and appointment).[61]

This section of the proposal went on at some length to present the government of China not as the Chinese (Han) government, but as the government of everyone, including the Tibetans. Consequently, Tibetans could participate in political life and could nominate individuals to serve in all national offices such as the Foreign Office. The proposal suggests that Tibet send representatives to Peking to discuss in more detail how to participate.

> 3. Finally, after the Chinese government implemented Tibet's autonomy, for the purpose of exercising full sovereignty over a part of the nation (Tibet), the Chinese government was to appoint a high official to be stationed in Tibet as China's representative. He, on the one hand, would carry out national administrative measures and, on the other, would guide the regional autonomy.[62]

On 16 November, the Tibetans responded with a written counterproposal that attempted to break the stalemate by conceding subordination to China within the framework of complete autonomy and territorial readjustments in Tibet's favor. According to Chinese sources, it said:

> 1. In dealing with external affairs, Tibet shall remain an integral part of the territory of China; but the Chinese must promise that they will not change the administration of Tibet into a province.
> 2. Tibet will listen to whatever China says with regard to such things as external or internal authority, and laws, regulations, etc., provided they do not harm the Tibetan dual religious-secular government.
> 3. The Tibet dual system of government will remain independent as at present, and in accordance with the oral promises

61. Li 1956: 39; Khung 1985: 155–56.
62. Ibid. The term *sovereignty* is a translation of *bdag dbang cha tshang* in the Tibetan.

made at different times in the past, the Chinese government will not interfere with Tibetan civil and military power.

4. Tibet will continue friendly relations with all its neighboring states and all the peoples believing in Buddhism. Any parts of treaties between Tibet and any foreign country that are not complete will be settled jointly with the Chinese government.

5. Only one representative of the Chinese government may be stationed in Tibet but his retinue shall not exceed twenty-five. This representative must be a true believer in Buddhism. The route taken by a new representative and his retinue must be by sea and not through Sikang [Kham].

6. Recognition of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, his enthronement, the selection and inauguration of the regent, and the appointments of officials from the shapes up shall be conducted or made by the Tibetan government as at present. The Chinese representative in Tibet shall be notified of the proceedings in writing.

7. Those Chinese people who have resided in Tibet since the Chinese-Tibetan War of the year [1912] and have been under the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Office shall remain governed by the laws of Tibet. The representative of the Chinese government shall exercise no control over them.

8. Military forces to be stationed on the borders of Tibet for defense purpose shall be dispatched by the government of Tibet as at present. In the event of foreign invasion, or if additional soldiers are needed, the Chinese government will be consulted and in accordance with the situation, military measures will be taken.

9. In order to avoid further possible disputes and to maintain peace on the borders, the northeastern boundary between Kokonor [Amdo] and Tibet should be maintained as proposed the year before last [1932], with the Golok area, which has long been under Tibet, to be included on the Tibetan side. As for the boundary between Tibet and Szechwan, the territory and people, together with the administration of Dege, Nyarong, Triu [Kanze], Targye monastery should be turned over to the Tibetan government at the earliest possible date.

10. The Chinese government should not give asylum to, or acknowledge as representative, any Tibetan, ecclesiastical or secular, who has rebelled against the Tibetan government and escaped to China.[63]

The proposal ended with a statement that these points had been approved by the National Assembly and that China should let the assembly know its decision.[64]

This Tibetan counterproposal illustrates again the inherent inconsistency of the China policy of the late Dalai Lama. Since 1912 Tibet had argued on some occasions that it was independent, but on other occasions it had indicated its willingness to accept subordinate status as a part of China provided that Tibetan internal systems were left untouched and provided China relinquished control over a number of important ethnic Tibetan groups in Kham and Amdo. The overriding issue for Tibet was not worldwide acceptance of Tibet's pure independence but, rather, the realistic goal of achieving a final solution to the volatile Eastern border dispute, which could erupt into open warfare, precipitate an invasion of Central Tibet, and put an end to Tibet's de facto independence.

With the memory of the 1932 fighting in Kham fresh in their minds, the Tibetan leadership offered Huang Mu-sung a moderate Simla-type compromise, albeit without reference to British participation. Tibet's insistence on territorial concessions from China and willingness to accept only token Chinese authority in Tibet, however, seemed all too familiar to the Chinese. Huang was by this time extremely worried that early snows might close the passes between Szechuan and Tibet, preventing his return to China. On 27 November he informed the shapes that he was returning to China but wanted to leave his wireless unit and one or two officials to facilitate a continuation of this new dialogue between Tibet and China.[65] The Kashag agreed.

In the final days of the Huang mission, the Tibetans reciprocated the

63. Khung 1985: 160; Li 1956: 169–70. The Tibetan offer of subordination was also reported by the British (IOR, L/PS/12/4175, letter from the political officer in Sikkim (F. W. Williamson) to H. Metcalfe, chief of the Foreign and Political Department, Government of India, dated 20 January 1935).
64. Khung 1985: 160.
65. Ibid.: 160–61.

honorary titles and ranks Huang had given them by conferring honorary governmental ranks upon the Chinese: Huang was given a full dress-set for an official of the rank of dzasa, and each of his next four officers were given dress-sets worn by Tibetan officials of the fourth rank.

Huang's final letter to the Kashag contains a revealing summary of the events from the Chinese perspective:

> From—Huang Musung, Lhasa
> To—The Kashag, Lhasa
>
> Although it is now nearly three months since I have been staying in the religious country of Tibet, yet I felt that as if I have stayed only a few days. The reason of my so feeling was that the King of Tibet, his Ministers, and the people of the country have been kind to me. I, in return, felt very thankful to them.
>
> I am very glad to say that the Chinese Government have given presents to the Tibetan Government. The latter also sent a large amount of return presents to the former.
>
> It is a great pleasure to me that the Tibetan Government who made all the necessary arrangements with regard to our lodging and other necessities. I myself shall never forget the hospitalities shown toward me.
>
> The ancient Emperors and the large Provinces of China have maintained Chinese and Tibetan affairs faithfully and the friendly relations increasing. Owing to the devotion to religion by the Holy country of Tibet, all the people of China remain prosperous like the ocean of religion.
>
> It will be remembered that during the invasion by Zung-gar into Tibet of the looting and damages done to the Gods, men, country and Monasteries. Thereafter again the fighting between the Tibetans and the Gurkhas.
>
> Emperors Kang-she and Chen-lung, however, found out that the Tibetan Government were in difficult position and were unable to oppose enemies, deputed Lonchen named Karpel and Pu Tung-tang providing with cash and kind and many armed Chinese soldiers. Thus by losing many lives and wealth Tibet was brought to a peaceful country as it was before. It is needless to repeat what help was given to the Tibetans as they remember them well themselves.
>
> Ever since the abdication of the Mongolian descent Emperor, internal trouble ensued all over the Empire. Taking opportunity of the situation Foreign powers had been disturbing us one after another. Hence the friendly relations between China and Tibet remain unresumed until now.

However the friendly relations which existed was based upon the solemn oaths of the Emperors of China and by their kind presents of cash and kinds to Tibet. Tibet is indisputably a country of China, therefore China and Tibet are one and the same.

All the officials and the subjects of Tibet show unity with the Chinese like an undamaged bridge. Foreign powers also acknowledge that China and Tibet are the same as one. So why China and Tibet should separate themselves now when they are linked to each other like the body and its limbs.

The reason of my so saying was that the late Dalai Lama had not consulted the Chinese Government with regard to the dealings in Tibetan affairs—either military or civil, but he had been doing as he liked. We, however, had to restrain from despatching troops to Tibet.

Both China and Tibet have very unfortunately lost the precious Dalai Lama. The whole population of China are also much grieved on the death of His Holiness, but they are anxious to see that through the kindness of the late Dalai Lama peace and friendship would maintain between China and Tibet as before.

I, Huang Musung, am deputed by the Chinese Government as an officer on special duty to Tibet to perform religious ceremonies in honour of the late Dalai Lama and also for the purpose of increasing religion in Tibet. Moreover after an amicable agreement between the Tibetans and myself, I was to discuss over different boundary questions without fail.

During my journey all the Tibetan officials on the frontier and the men along the way showed me and to my party every hospitality and received us warmly which made me feel that peace and friendship between China and Tibet will remain as before. Their friendly attitude towards me has given me great pleasure.

For the sake of bringing happiness to Tibet the high officials should consult the common people of the country also. The decision whatever may it be will be given by the Chinese Government.

On the 8th day of the 10th Chinese month a written statement was presented to the Kashag to which a reply was received on the 17th instant (Chinese) informing that "there is friendly relations between the Chinese and Tibetans, but to discuss immediately any questions between us will be delayed according to the present positions of the foreign powers." If that much of questions are treated as unimportant, I, although am a man of very little intellect yet it is seen that there will be no peace at all the China and as well to Tibet I have therefore had to call on the Kashag on the 24th instant (Chinese) and had explained matters as far as

possible, but to my disappointment the Kashag did not come to terms. I then could not help reporting immediately to the Chinese Government stating that "question of establishing friendly relations with Tibet failed. There is a likelihood of causing frictions between China and Tibet. So I had to give up hope for the present." I had afterwards received orders from my Government to return to China as soon as I had finished all the religious ceremonies. I accordingly informed Potala that wished to come over to pay my departing respects. But Kashag called on me on the 11th day of the 9th month (Chinese) [date incorrect: tenth month] and asked me to consider best and stay for some more days. On this day I was informed by the Kashag that my repeated suggestions with regard to establishing peace and prospects between China and Tibet were considered by them, but I was asked to submit my suggestions in writing which I complied. The Kashag told me that my suggestions were read to the National Assembly of Tibet as requested by me. I appreciated highly for Kashag had shown love and affection to their subjects. I was again informed that to decide any questions was rather difficult unless many people's views are taken. I said that whatever there may be in the minds of people, it will be distinctly visible like the shadow of the moon in a clear water. So if you do your best to bring unity between China and Tibet, peace and happiness will be the result for the officials and men of the country (Kingdom).

It will have been seen the workings of many foreign powers are very deceiving and changeable every day. On the face such situation if we think of only passing the time the country, the men and the animals will be deprived of their hope for peace. I am informing the Kashag all these humbly and for the benefit of all the people of Tibet like the holy priests who pray for salvation for the living creatures. Likewise if the Kashag would also take interest into the matter. I Huang Musung, may be permitted to do my best for the unity of China and Tibet. I leave this secret (beloved) letter just at the point of departure. Please bear in mind.

Dated the 27th day of the 11th month of the 23rd year of the Republican Government of China.

sd. Huang Musung.[66]

66. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, rough translation sent by the political officer in Sikkim the Government of India, dated I March 1935 and sent by the Government of India the secretary of state for India, India Office, London. The copy of the translation of letter was obtained by the British trade agent in Gyantse, and the English was not c rected by Delhi.

Despite Huang's protestation of failure in his letter to the Kashag, the Huang mission must in hindsight be seen as an enormous tactical success. His success in leaving an official in Lhasa in charge of the wireless established a de facto official Chinese presence in Lhasa that would remain in place until 1949. Although Tibetans naively considered this simply an extension of the Huang mission, it allowed the Chinese government to claim to their own people and the world that they had reestablished their official presence or authority in Tibet. The following translation of an extract from the *China Weekly Review* of 15 December 1934 illustrates the usefulness of this as propaganda:

> In order to cement the relations between the Central Government and Tibet and facilitate direction of affairs in that border territory, the Executive Yuan has decided to station a Resident at Lhasa, capital of Tibet. It is understood that Liu Pa-chen will be appointed the Resident with Chiang Chi-yu as his Associate.[67]

Huang also skillfully improved the attitude of the governmental and monastic elite toward China. He was rewarded by being promoted to the position of head of the important Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Office after his return to China.

By contrast, the Tibetan government obtained by its decision to permit the Chinese to keep an official and a wireless in Tibet only the possibility of further dialogue. This decision again reflects the paradox of Tibet's China policy: a refusal to relinquish its de facto independence, but at the same time a refusal to make a complete break with China. China dangled the hope of a satisfactory settlement while refusing to yield on key issues.

If the Lungshar conspiracy represents a turning point in internal political affairs, the Huang Mu-sung delegation marks a turning point in external affairs. After a hiatus of twenty-two years, Lhasa again had a Chinese presence, in control of the only wireless unit in Tibet. In December 1933, Lungshar had written to the British that the present leaders might not be able to cope with the renewed Chinese threat as the Dalai Lama had. In this, their first test, the Tibetan leadership had not yielded on the ultimate questions but had submitted on an impor-

67. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, British official at Nanking to the British Mission at Lhasa.

tant tactical one. Their inability to win any concrete gains from the Huang mission, particularly with respect to the volatile issue of the Panchen Lama's return to Tibet, meant that tensions with China would continue.

BRITISH VIEWS

Both the death of the Dalai Lama and the Huang mission had important impacts on Britain, the third actor in the Sino-Tibetan dispute. It too saw the death of the 13th Dalai Lama as a logical juncture at which to review its Tibetan policy. Two long letters reveal the factors underlying Britain's reluctance to take an active role in Tibet at this time. The first is from H. Metcalfe, chief of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India, to his subordinate F. W. Williamson, the political officer in Sikkim:

> regarding the Chinese Mission to Tibet. The Government of India observe with some concern your forecast that this visit may result in the re-establishment of a Chinese Amban at Lhasa, which can hardly fail to be followed by an increase in Chinese influence in Tibet and may lead to a serious weakening of British influence in that country. The correspondence between His Majesty's Government, the Government of India and the Peking Legation which took place in 1932 and 1933 suggests that neither the Peking Legation nor His Majesty's Government will be prepared to proceed to any great length in bringing pressure on the Chinese Government, unless they are forced to do so by events beyond their control. There can be no doubt that they have valid reasons for this attitude, namely,
>
> (1) their extremely large commercial interest in China proper which make it extremely undesireable for them to antagonise the Central Chinese Government.
>
> (2) His Majesty's Government as a Member of the League of Nations cannot afford to incur any suspicion that they are aiming at detaching Tibet from China in the same way as Japan have detached Manchuria.
>
> Propaganda to this effect against His Majesty's Government has already been rife both in China and in Japan, the latter country being naturally anxious to distract attention from their own proceedings by directing suspicion at His Majesty's Government.

(3) the only real interest which we have in Tibet is the maintenance on the Indian Frontier of a friendly Government which is unlikely to create disturbance within our borders. This consideration is naturally of greater concern to the Government of India than it is either to His Majesty's Government or to the Peking Legation and neither of the latter authorities are likely to attach much importance to it as opposed to their own interest in retaining the goodwill of the Chinese Government.

... It is, I think, obvious from what I have said above that the Government of India will have great difficulty in persuading His Majesty's Government to take a strong line with the Chinese Government over the Tibetan question, unless we can produce much more cogent arguments than we have been able to offer hitherto. Our hands are, moreover, to a large extent, tied by the admissions made by us in 1914 with regard to the suzerainty of China over Tibet and, as you have pointed out, by our agreement at that time to the presence of a Chinese Amban in Lhasa. In spite of these difficulties it would seem to us desireable to place before His Majesty's Government some reasoned exposition of the policy which we think should be adopted and then to leave it to His Majesty's Government to decide from the larger point of view what it is worth while doing. We presume that the maintenance of the Government of India's influence at Lhasa in some form is essential, and it would seem necessary to attempt to convince His Majesty's Government of this fact by all the arguments which we can muster. Secondly, we should I feel suggest practicable means which can be adopted for retaining the friendship of the Tibetan Government in spite of the determined bid now being made by the Chinese on the other side. Would you give the whole matter your careful consideration during the next few weeks in the light of any further developments at Lhasa and send me your views demi-officially when you feel able to do so?[68]

Williamson responded to Metcalfe's letter with a frank assessment of the current situation and of future dangers:

Although Chinese and Japanese propaganda is from time to time carried on to the effect that we are trying to "detach" Tibet from China, there is really no question of this. Tibet is already detached and has been detached for about 23 years. China is trying to reattach her. Tibet's anxiety is to remain independent, as she is now. The only weapon which the

68. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, letter from H. Metcalfe to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 17 September 1934.

Chinese can use in any negotiations with Tibet is to play on the latter's fears of China. Tibet is terrified of aggression on her East and Northeast frontiers and to force her to give concessions to China, Huang Mu-sung has been playing on that fear. He has offered an eastern frontier favourable to Tibet in return for certain concessions by the latter. His demand that part of the Tibetan army should be converted into a special frontier force in Chinese pay and under Chinese control has been rejected, but the Tibetan Government have agreed, though reluctantly to accept Chinese suzerainty and the presence of a Chinese representative in Lhasa with an escort of not more than 25 men. Rai Bahadur [Norbhu Döndup] thinks that the Chinese Government will not accept this as sufficient and . will refuse to ratify the frontier offered by Huang and will use Tibetan fears of aggression to extract further concessions and to try brow-beat Tibet into permitting the Chinese representative at Lhasa to have some sort of say in Tibet's foreign relations.

Tibet feels that she must lean on some one. She would prefer to lean on us. I think that she would be ready, and almost eager, to give us control of her foreign relations if we were to undertake to protect her from external aggression and to send troops for the purpose to her eastern frontier if necessary. High Tibetan officials more than once asked the Rai Bahadur whether we should be willing to send troops. Any such undertaking on our part is of course impossible, and Tibet feels that the so-called diplomatic help which we so freely offer would be of little use in her future difficulties with China. It is only for this reason that she had agreed to admit Chinese suzerainty and to accept a Chinese representative. The Rai Bahadur considers that Tibet's admission of Chinese suzerainty is very vague and translates the wording of the admission as follows: "On repeated pressure from Huang Mu-sung and in order to show the outside nations and as Tibet adjoins Chinese territory we admit that we are subordinate to China, but all our external relations and internal administration will be carried out by Tibet."

Although the admission of suzerainty may perhaps merely be theoretical and a saving of China's face, the posting of a Chinese representative at Lhasa would be a serious matter for us. Even if such a representative is not regarded as an Amban and is not of very high status, he will be a rallying point for all anti-British intrigues and will constantly work for Chinese control, especially of all relations with ourselves. . . .

There is no doubt that China is a bad neighbor. The recent trouble on the frontier of Burma and Yunnan is sufficient to show this. In 1910

the Chinese showed a great interest in Bhutan. The Chinese representative at Gyantse sent agents to get in touch with the Maharaja of Bhutan and the Paro Penlop. The Chinese Trade Agent at Gyantse wrote to the Paro Penlop asking him to supply rice for the Chinese troops. . . . Amban Len at Lhasa addressed a letter purporting to be his orders to the Deb Raja of Bhutan, the Paro and Tsongsa Penlops and other Headmen and subjects. . . . The Chinese also posted troops at Tawang on the Bhutan frontier. There was in fact constant annoyance from the Chinese throughout the year, and I think I have said enough to show the kind of irritation we may constantly expect if the Chinese regain control of Tibet. We cannot contemplate with equanimity the possibility of the recurrence of this kind of thing.

I feel very strongly, however, that we must under all circumstances continue to deal with Tibet as a completely autonomous country and must treat the Chinese Amban, if one appears, merely as a foreign representative. We must never at any time deal with or consult him in any manner whatever concerning Tibetan affairs or foreign relations. Further, we must never make the mistake of entering into any negotiations whatever about Tibet with China, unless Tibet is actually a party to them on equal terms as was the case in 1913–14. . . .

The present situation in Tibet is critical. We have a Government in Tibet which is not really united. Each man plays for himself and the country is not under one strong ruler as was the case while the Dalai Lama was alive. This Government is, however, most friendly to ourselves but is afraid of China. We have for years encouraged Tibet to rely on us, but we cannot give her one thing she really wants, a guarantee of protection against aggression on her Eastern frontier. . . . we should, I think, do what little we can. Our intentions are honest enough. We merely want her to be completely independent in substance even if she is merely "autonomous" in name.[69]

Williamson then made a number of concrete suggestions. First, he suggested that he should be allowed to visit Lhasa during the coming summer of 1935, "since if I do not go, the Tibetan Government will

69. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, letter from F. W. Williamson to H. Metcalfe, dated 20 January 1935.

think either that we are indifferent to these recent developments or tha we have been frightened by the success of Huang's mission." He goe on to say: "I ought to be generously provided with money. Some Rs 70,000/–would be a suitable sum. It is a mere nothing compared t what the Chinese Mission have spent. . . . Such a visit would enable m to estimate something to re-establish some sort of British influence."[70]

Second, Williamson urged that he be allowed to offer Tibet exemp tion from payment of the second and third installments of one *lakh* pe year, due for recently supplied arms. He explained to his superior:

> Tibet is badly in need of money and some sort of "disguised subsidy" of this kind would be very acceptable. This offer ought to be liable to be cancelled without notice if a permanent Chinese representative appears at Lhasa, and Tibet should be told so. I should also be authorized to offer that we should either train more Tibetan officers or troops in India, or send British officers to Lhasa for the purpose if the Tibetan Government prefer it. This training should be done at our expense and we should not ask the Tibetan Government to pay anything for it. . . . We should also be ready to sell Tibet more munitions if and when she wants them. This (and the training) are all we can do to help her in the matter about which she is most nervous, Chinese aggression.[71]

Williamson also suggested that if a permanent Chinese representative appeared at Lhasa, the question of appointing a British one should be seriously considered, and that the British consular officer at Nanking should get in touch with the Tibetan representatives there.

He closed with a plea for a well-funded mission to Lhasa under his command in 1935: "A little money, but not much, is required. It would, I think, be bad policy to stint a few tens of thousands of rupees, or even (including part of the cost of munition) a few lakhs at the present critical time. It is possible that we may fail to save Tibet from domination by China but I venture to think that, if these suggestions are accepted, we shall at least have done all that we can at the present time."[72] As will be examined in Chapter 8, Williamson's plea for a mis-

70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.

sion to counteract Chinese influence was approved in Delhi and London. He left for Lhasa in 1935, opening a new chapter in Tibet-British relations.

The Huang mission thus not only reestablished a Chinese presence in Tibet but also set in motion a period of intense international jockeying, with Britain vying to forestall Chinese control over Tibet.

8

THE BRITISH, THE CHINESE, AND THE PANCHEN LAMA

When the 13th Dalai Lama died, the Panchen Lama and his followers had been languishing in self-imposed exile in China for over a decade, but an initiative the Dalai Lama launched about a year before his death had raised new hope of reconciliation.

EARLY MOVES TO SETTLE THE PANCHEN-DALAI DIFFERENCES

The exchange of letters between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama in 1924 did not bring a solution of their dispute any closer. The Panchen and his followers therefore sought the support of the Chinese government and at the same time used their long-standing relationship with the British to try to exert pressure on the Dalai Lama to accede to their views. For example, on 7 September 1926, the Panchen Lama's official, Tsa Serkhang, was granted an interview with His Royal Highness Prince George when he visited Peking. The Prince expressed the hope that "the unfortunate domestic differences which had led to the Panchen Lama's departure from Tibet would soon be adjusted and that H. H. [the Panchen Lama] would be able to return to his homeland in the near future." Significantly, he opened the door to British involvement by commenting that "he felt sure that the Government of India would be glad to lend their good offices if their mediation in the matter

should be desired and would be of any assistance to the parties concerned."[1]

The next Anglo-Panchen contact took place six months later in Mukden. In March 1927 the Panchen Lama told the British official F. W. Williamson that he proposed to return to Tibet as soon as possible. Then in May 1927 Tsa Serkhang went to India to see F. M. Bailey, the political officer in Sikkim. He reminded Bailey of the pledge the Prince of Wales made to the Panchen Lama in India in 1905: "if ever he had any trouble he should write to the British Government who would help him." He then handed Bailey a letter from the Panchen Lama that said he would be grateful for any help and advice Bailey could offer and "begged the British Government to advise the Tibetan Government not to oppress him."[2] In response, Bailey wrote that while he could not interfere in the internal affairs of Tibet, due to the long-standing friendship between the Tashi Lama and the British he would do what he could to help, if the Panchen would tell him just what was wanted.[3] The Panchen's reply simply asked Bailey to advise Tsa Serkhang, adding that he would say more in due course. Similar approaches were made the same year to the British in Peking.

In May 1928, Bailey sent the Dalai Lama a letter offering to facilitate a new dialogue by transmitting messages from the Tibetan government to the Panchen Lama in China. He also wrote: "It would be advisable to inform the Tashi Lama that he will be well treated and that any difficulties he has will be carefully investigated. . I am very anxious to do all I can for the benefit of Tibet and so I hope that you will let me know whether I can be of any service in the matter."[4] The Dalai Lama responded with a polite warning in a letter dated 8 June 1928: "If His Serenity returns to Tibet with a pure mind, I shall do my best to help him . . . [but] I hope that you will remember that in accordance with the [Simla] Treaty the British Government should not interfere in the

1. IOR, L/PS/12/4174, "Note on the Tashi Lama," written by F. M. Bailey, the political officer in Sikkim, dated 2 December 1932.

2. Ibid.

3. The British always referred to the Panchen Lama as the Tashi Lama, a term not used by Tibetans. They also referred to him as His Serenity to differentiate between him and the Dalai Lama, whom they referred to as His Holiness.

4. IOR, L/PS/12/4174, "Note on the Tashi Lama," written by F. M. Bailey, the political officer in Sikkim, dated 2 December 1932.

internal affairs of Tibet."[5] Bailey explained that his letter had been pe sonal, not official: he had written as a friend of both the lamas. Tl Dalai Lama graciously said he had understood this all along.

While these exchanges were taking place, the nephew of the Panche Lama complicated matters by escaping, with some of his relatives, fro his internment in Lhasa. The Tibetan government recaptured them i Shigatse and sent them back to Lhasa, where they were imprisone this time in shackles.[6]

The next Anglo-Panchen contact was a letter the Panchen Lan wrote in June 1930 to J. L. R. Weir, the new political officer in Sikkin implying that he was recruiting a private army to return with him t Tashilhunpo and asking the British to supply him with arms and an munition. It also ominously indicated that the Panchen might, thoug reluctantly, use Chinese troops if the Tibetan government refused t invite him back on his terms. The letter said:

> Except for one or two individuals all Tibetans have great faith in me and they are expecting my return. I also desire to go back to Tibet at once but you are aware of the danger I would have to face there if I were to return without outside assistance and I cannot take this risk. The Chinese would help me by sending their troops if I were to seek their assistance. . . . If many Chinese troops arrive in Tibet it will be a great hardship on the subjects, the religion will suffer and self government will disappear. In consideration of the above dangers I have postponed my return. . . . The Tibetan Government of Lhasa taking no notice of past or future, consider my (absence) a trifling matter and continue to ignore me. . . . For the protection of our lives, it is essential for me to take an army if I go to Tibet, otherwise the evil people of Tibet may not do the right thing. In the circumstance I would request that you will kindly arrange to help us in lending arms and ammunition for our mutual benefit. In case you find it inconvenient to supply munition, I would request a considerable sum of money which if granted I shall repay on my arrival in Tibet.[7]

5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. IOR, L/PS/12/4174 (PZ 4362), note given to the political officer in Sikkim b Tsa Serkhang, dated 25 June 1930, included in a telegram from the political officer i Sikkim to the Government of India.

Weir, of course, said it would be impossible to provide arms.

By 1931, the British were increasingly concerned about how their own interests in Tibet would be affected by the ever closer alliance between the Panchen Lama and China. British India's Tibetan policy at this time rested on maintaining Tibet as a buffer zone free from Russian and Chinese influence and control.[8] The British, fearing that China would use the Panchen Lama as a means to impose greater Chinese control on Tibet, were eager to see the Dalai-Panchen conflict resolved amicably. Weir therefore continued to offer the Dalai Lama the good services of the Government of India in this matter.

Weir's urgings, with the defeat in 1932 of the Tibetan army in Kham, induced the Dalai Lama to write to the Panchen Lama in late 1932 asking him to return. As a gesture of good faith, at the same time he released the relatives of the Panchen Lama who had been languishing in chains in prison. Sent through the British Embassy in China to insure its delivery, the Dalai Lama's letter opened formal negotiations between the Panchen Lama and the Tibetan government:

> I wrote you twice, once in the Water-Hog Year (1923), when Your Serenity left your monastery for China and Mongolia and once again on the 2nd day of the 5th month of the Fire-Tiger Year (12th June 1926). . I hope you have received both the letters. I have had no reply to either of them. From the very beginning the relations between us, the father and the son, have been loving and affectionate. . . . It cannot therefore be possible that you are now acting in a way calculated to rupture this relationship. The extent of the harm which has been done by the conspiracy of some of the conscience-stricken servants is well-known to everyone. But you, naturally would not for a moment think of plunging Tibet into war, the country which is administered by the father and the son; and yet rumours are rife in Lhasa to that effect. In these days respect for religion is decreasing. It is a time when following the example of foreigners, every one is fond of black deeds (i.e., war). Nearly ten years have elapsed since you left Tibet and while matters remain in this state I am full of anxiety as to what might happen to your life. Moreover, if you could come back to U [Central Tibet], the relations between the teacher and the pupil would be like those between fire and the smoke. The noble

8. IOR, L/PS/12/4177, minute paper of Secret and Political Department, Government of India, dated 22 February 1934.

tradition of our predecessors will also be maintained. Please therefore consider the matter and let me have a reply on which I can act.

Despatched on the 10th day of the 8th month of the Water-Monkey Year (9th October 1932).[9]

In answer to this letter and to oral communications made by the Da Lama's officials in China, the Panchen Lama replied on 26 Janu 1933 that he had never received the letter sent by the Dalai Lama 1926 but that, in any case, he was sending two monk representativ Ngagchen Rimpoche and Trunyichemmo Khembo Lobsang Gyents (see Figure 26), to Lhasa to discuss his return to Tibet.[10]

The two representatives arrived in Lhasa on 2 June 1933 and h long meetings with the Tibetan National Assembly regarding a set conditions the Panchen had sent. While there is no direct record these terms, a later discussion between the Panchen's two envoys a F. W. Williamson, the British political officer in Sikkim, revealed at le their version of the Panchen's conditions and the National Assembl responses:

1. [The Panchen asked for] The restoration of all property accumulated in Tashi Lhunpo monasteries from the time of the Tashi Lama Lobzang Chhogyen (lived? 1569–1662) down to the time of the Tashi Lama Tenpai Wangchuk (1854–1882) (this referred to territory lost during previous incarnations of the Panchen Lama).

Reply [of National Assembly]: No reply was remembered.

9. IOR, L/PS/12/4174, enclosure in letter from the political officer in Sikkim the Government of India, dated 11 October 1932. Weir believed he had been instrum tal in convincing the Dalai Lama in 1932 to make a major gesture. As he put it: "Af several discussions with the Dalai Lama I induced him to release the relatives of the Ta Lama who had been imprisoned in chains for several years. He also agreed to writ sincere friendly letter to the Tashi Lama inviting him to return. In view of the stubb silence maintained by the Tashi Lama towards previous letters sent by the Dalai Lan this was a great concession on his part." (IOR, L/PS/12/4175, letter from J. L. R. W to the Government of India.)

10. IOR, L/PS/12/4174, copies of Panchen's letters included in a letter from t political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 12 April 1933. Some Tib ans say that while the Dalai Lama himself was sympathetic to making concessions to t Panchen Lama, both Kumbela and Lungshar were strongly opposed to yielding to t Tashilhunpo forces and that this accounts for the impasse. However, this seems higl improbable, given the real political issues concerned and the Dalai Lama's long comm ment to the creation of a more centralized polity. Such views appear to reflect a tender of Tibetans to attribute all bad thoughts and deeds to the staff and advisors of a gr lama rather than to the lama himself.



26.

Ngagchen Rimpoche (mounted), the Panchen Lama's representative in Lhasa (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)



27.

The four trunyichemmo in 1936; (left to right) Dombo, Ramba, Temba Jayan, Cawtang (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

2. [The Panchen asked to be given] Control of Shigatse, Namling, Penam and Nangartse Districts.

Reply [of National Assembly]: The Districts will not be given to the Panchen Lama. On the other hand, two other estates will also be confiscated to pay for the up-keep of the army, and the payments due from Tashi Lhunpo are heavily in arrears. Tashi Lhunpo may have the income from the small Districts of Lhatse, Namring, Phuntsoling, Khamba and Dam, but the District Chief will be appointed by Lhasa.

3. [The Panchen also asked for the] Restoration of all property moveable and immoveable of Tashi Lhunpo officials and their servants confiscated since the Tashi Lama's departure in 1923.

Reply [of National Assembly]: Three houses will be restored to certain officials, and also some livestock. Nothing else will be restored.

4. [The Panchen asked for] Freedom of movement of Tashi Lhunpo servants and officials throughout Tibet without restrictions.

Reply [of National Assembly]: Until the Panchen Lama returns, his officials will not be allowed to move about as they like.

5. [The Panchen asked for a] Refund of all sums collected from Tsang Province under new taxes since the Panchen Lama left in 1923.

Reply [of National Assembly]: No refunds will be made. Tashi Lhunpo is required to pay 1/4th of the military expenses in case of war. They must pay something (to be fixed later) in addition to the income of the 2 confiscated estates referred to in (2) above. If desired, money may be paid instead of transport and supplies.

6. [The Panchen indicated that] Tashi Lhunpo Labrang should have a bodyguard and this and other troops at Tashi Lhunpo should remain entirely under the Tashi Lama's personal control.

7. If, in the future, the necessity should arise, the whole of the troops of Tsang Province should be paid by the Tashi Lama and controlled by him.

8. Taxes in Tsang Province should be fixed and collected by the Tashi Lama's officials and not by those of the Lhasa Government.

Reply [of National Assembly]: None.

9. [The Panchen said that] In the event of agreement, the agreement should be witnessed by a foreign power (i.e. Great Britain or China).

Reply [of National Assembly]: The Panchen Lama must return by sea. There is no necessity for a foreign power to act as a witness to any agreement.[11]

This exchange reveals not only how far apart the Panchen and the Tibetan government were at the time of the Dalai Lama's death but, even more clearly than in previous letters, the manner in which the disagreement concerned not simply taxes but the nature of the political system in Tibet. The Panchen Lama wanted a return to what he claimed was an earlier system in which Tashilhunpo functioned relatively autonomously and he wanted the additional right to maintain an armed force of his own. The Panchen Lama's letter to Williamson conveys this:

I am always think of Tibet's troubles. I have recently received letters and telegrams from the Tibetan Government in which they ask me to return to Tibet. I have decided to return to Tibet as soon as possible but, before I do so, I think it would be better if the differences, which were

11. IOR, L/PS/12/4181, letter of the political officer in Sikkim to the foreign secretary, Government of India, dated 8 January 1934.

> created by one or two evil-minded men by *introducing innovations which conflicted with the old relations existing between the Tashilhunpo Government and the Tibetan Government,* were definitely settled, so that no dispute may arise in the future between the two governments.[12]

Real negotiation regarding these issues was not possible, because th Panchen's two envoys did not have the authority to alter any of th Panchen's original terms. The Tibetan National Assembly prepared written response to the Panchen, which was read to the two envoy before they left Lhasa for China in November 1933. It was this info mation that the envoys passed on to Williamson.

The two envoys returned to China via India but first visited Tash lhunpo, the seat of the Panchen Lama. After spending several month there, they moved on to Sikkim and India where, on 24 March 193 they met Williamson and informed him that the talks in Lhasa had no been fruitful. They thought the Panchen Lama would not return und the terms offered by the Tibetan National Assembly.[13]

The death of the Dalai Lama increased the Tibetan government desire to bring the Panchen Lama back to Tibet, where he could not b manipulated by the Chinese. The Kashag therefore sent the two envoy a telegram in Kalimpong, India, exhorting the Panchen Lama to retur to Tibet because supernatural divination had revealed an imminent dar ger to his life. This telegram provides a useful reminder of the beli system in effect in Tibet during this period:

> While consulting the Lhamo [deity] at Potala on the third of the first month [16 February 1934] by means of ballots known as Tsesum zenril [divine lottery] it predicted danger to the life of His Serenity the Panchen Lama so that we cannot bear the thought of his staying away so long and it is imperative for him to come by sea as soon as possible. With reference to the memorandum from the National Assembly to His Serenity unless you two are able to go to China direct with the least possible delay it should be forwarded to him in advance with request for an early reply on receipt of which we intend to send persons to accompany him

12. IOR, L/PS/12/4181, translation of a letter from the Panchen Lama to F. W Williamson, dated 9 August 1934 (emphasis added).

13. IOR, L/PS/12/4181, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Govern ment of India, dated 28 March 1934.

on his return journey. Advise us with regard to action taken by you in this matter.

sd. The Kashag[14]

The Kashag appears to have sent the same telegram to its representatives in Nanking, who personally carried it to the Panchen Lama.[15] Shakabpa writes of this:

> Apparently no clear-cut reply was given to the Tibetan representatives when they visited the Panchen Lama to deliver the cablegram. One of the representatives, Chospel Thubten, told me personally that it would have been a good thing if the Panchen Lama had accepted the conditions laid down by the Tibetan government; but he treated them with disdain.[16]

This defiant attitude was exhibited in a strident telegram the Panchen sent to the Kashag on 22 May 1934. He insisted that unless his original terms were met, he would not return to Tibet:

> According to your telegram and for general pleasure I wished immediate return by sea. I especially deputed Ngagchen Trungchi [and] on their return [they] gave me the [Assembly's] reply and details minutely but in the reply of the assembly nothing was mentioned agreeable about the difference of shung [Tibetan Government] and Labrang [Tashilhunpo] so you can imagine the position of my return aaa at the time of replying it seemed that due to the unagreeable opinion of some ignorants had put His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the learned Chieves and other Assembly uneasy to do anything aaa Now not being influenced by them I wish a reply soon agreeing to my conditions list which sent with Ngagchen Trungchi under my seal aaa from Tashi Lama Hangdra Lhundrup Ga Tshal Palace China on the 6th day of the 4th month of the Wood-Dog Year aaa letter follows.[17]

The Panchen's camp at this time was divided into two parties, one insisting that the Panchen return to Tibet overland with troops and large stores of munitions and the other wishing him to return through

14. IOR, L/PS/12/4181 (PZ 2763/34).
15. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 340–41.
16. Shakabpa 1967: 280.
17. IOR, L/PS/12/4181 (PZ 4115/34).

India without such a force. Ngagchen Rimpoche and Trungcl Khembo identified themselves as the leaders of the "India" party aı mentioned that Tsa Serkhang was associated with the "Overland" Parı They said that the Panchen Lama had bought about 1,000 rifles fro German firms at Shanghai, that he had one or two hundred men wł had been given some military training in China, considerable amoun of ammunition, and a number of followers from the Sino-Tibetan bo derlands and from Mongolia. The "Overland" party argued that tl British would not let the Panchen bring via India all the troops aı arms that they believed he would need to protect himself against aı future "unreasonable" orders from the Tibetan government like the oı that had forced him to flee in 1923.[18] The dominant attitude seemed be that they would never again let themselves become totally vulnerab to the wishes of the Tibetan government. Tsa Serkhang confirmed tl presence of such troops in a conversation with Norbhu Döndup:

> Tsa Serkhang was very hesitant but on the Rai Bahadur begging him to be perfectly frank, he said that it would be very difficult for the Tashi Lama to return through India, owing to the large number of soldiers and munitions he would wish to bring. The soldiers were mostly Tibetan and Mongolians, but had been recruited in China. There might be "some thousands" of troops and a similar number of rifles.[19]

The Panchen apparently believed that the death of the Dalai Lan would weaken the resolve and the unity of the Tibetan government ar increase China's willingness to back his return to Tibet. He and h officials had been soliciting Chinese government and popular suppo for his speedy return under Chinese auspices. He visited Nanking i early 1934 and received new titles and honors from the Nationali government, which he was quoted in newspaper reports as praisir profusely.[20] In March of that year he told A. Cadogan that "he ha now received many messages from the Lamas and people of Tibet we coming him back. He was therefore now only awaiting the instructioı

18. IOR, L/PS/12/4181, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Gover ment of India, dated 26 January 1935.

19. IOR, L/PS/12/4181, report of Norbhu Döndup's conversation in a letter fro the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 26 August 1934.

20. IOR, L/PS/12/4174, typescript note about the Tashi Lama, author unknow but presumed to be Walton of the India Office, dated 2 December 1932.

of the Chinese Government on the subject."[21] Feeling confident, the Panchen sent his two envoys back to Lhasa in late 1934 with the same set of conditions as the year before and the arrogant explanation that refraining from increasing his demands following the death of the Dalai Lama was evidence of his eagerness to return. The Panchen Lama's two representatives reached Sikkim by late November 1934 and arrived in Lhasa apparently about the beginning of 1935.

This unyielding position received reinforcement in early 1935 when Huang Mu-sung returned to China and recommended that the government provide the Panchen with an escort and assist him to return to Tibet. On 8 February 1935, the Chinese government responded by appointing the Panchen "Special Cultural Commissioner for the Western Regions" and assigning a personal escort of 500 Chinese troops to his base at Sining in Tsinghai.[22] Soon after this, Huang Mu-sung was appointed chairman of the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs and was thus put in a position to further this policy.

The Panchen Lama also took a hard line with the British. In response to a telegram from Williamson advising the Panchen's two envoys (and, in a separate telegram, the Kashag) to "concentrate on attaining a satisfactory settlement and not to delay matters over trifling issues," the Panchen replied in mid-January 1935 that he had sent his delegates to Lhasa to negotiate with the Tibetan government "so that I can return without having recourse to arms."[23] He asked Britain to remain neutral if it felt unable to back his militant position. Williamson reported this as follows:

> On his return he hoped to place Anglo-Tibetan amity even on a firmer footing than it used to be during the Dalai Lama's time; indicated that should the Tibetan Government decline to admit his demands, he hoped that His Majesty's Government would give him such help as might be necessary and ended with a suggestion that His Majesty's Government, should they be unable to help him, should remain neutral.[24]

21. IOR, L/PS/12/4181, report of interview with the Panchen Lama in China by A. Cadogan, British Minister in China, dated 9 March 1934.
22. Li 1956: 171–72.
23. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, B. Gould's report on Williamson's 1935 Mission.
24. Ibid.

And on 25 February 1935, the Panchen's representatives informed the British Embassy in Peking that they were meeting "with obstacles in connection with the division of spheres of control of the Tashi and Dalai Lamas respectively."[25] On 25 April 1935, Williamson answered the Panchen Lama, suggesting that he moderate his demands and be satisfied with the Tibetan government's offer.[26]

During this tense period, the regent wrote to Williamson (on 23 March 1935) inviting him to visit Lhasa that summer. The British jumped at the opportunity to repair the inroads made by Huang Musung.

THE WILLIAMSON MISSION TO LHASA OF 1935

The Williamson mission was intended to demonstrate that Britain was interested in Tibet and its problems. The British hoped it would also facilitate the return of the Panchen Lama from China. Its specific aims were:

> 1. To broach orally the subject of the Panchen Lama's return and to seek to promote a settlement of any differences without His Majesty's Government or the Government of India assuming any responsibility for the maintenance of such a settlement. The question of a guarantee was not to be broached.
> 2. To ascertain whether the Chinese who were left behind with the wireless set were to be regarded as permanent representatives of China.
> 3. To ascertain what the Tibetan attitude was toward having a British Mission as a counterbalance to the Chinese Mission if the latter was to be permanent.

It was highly likely that the Tibetans would inquire what support they could expect from India and Great Britain in case of Chinese aggression, and Williamson was authorized to convey to the Tibetans only the following assurances:

25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.

1. That although Britain was prepared to admit the "theoretical suzerainty of China," it would adhere "to their present policy of regarding Tibet as an autonomous country in practice."

2. That Britain was anxious to maintain their traditional friendship with Tibet and to continue to have dealings with it as in the past.

3. That Britain was prepared, insofar as the merits of the case justified, to give Tibet the fullest diplomatic support in Nanking should Tibet become involved in any trouble with China.[27]

When the mission arrived in Lhasa on 26 August 1935, negotiations between the Panchen Lama and the Tibetan government had reached an impasse, although the Tibetan government had shown some flexibility by agreeing to restore to Tashilhunpo all ten Dzongs confiscated after 1923; remit new and enhanced taxation on all Tashilhunpo estates; reduce certain other new taxes; restore the movable but not the immovable property of the Tashilhunpo officials; and demand only a moderate contribution (in cash or kind) to the central government for the upkeep of soldiers. But it had also refused to turn over the additional districts of Shigatse, Namling, Penam, and Nangartse; permit the Panchen to raise and pay his own troops separately from the Tibetan government; restore property that had not belonged to the present Panchen Lama; recognize Tashilhunpo as independent or autonomous; or permit an escort of Chinese troops to accompany the Panchen.[28]

The issue of the Chinese escort was particularly unpopular among the officials in Lhasa. On 15 July the Tibetan government protested directly to China, following the National Assembly's categorical refusal to allow a Chinese military escort to enter Tibet.[29] At the time of Williamson's arrival in Lhasa, there was, therefore, considerable anxiety regarding the possibility of a Sino-Tibetan clash over the return of the Panchen Lama.

While Williamson waited for the regent and Trimön Shape, who would be making a religious tour of southern Tibet until late October, the Chinese took further action with regard to the escort. In September

27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.

1935, China appointed Ch'eng Yun as "Special Commissioner to Escort H. H. the Panchen Lama, the Western Border's Cultural Commissioner," and news reached Lhasa that the Panchen was expected to leave soon for Tibet via Sikang.[30]

At this juncture the Tibetan government asked Williamson what the British government would be prepared to do if Tibet militarily opposed the Chinese escort troops and the Chinese government sent reinforcements. Williamson, knowing the firm British policy against sending troops to assist Tibet, evaded the issue by pointing out China's weakness at that time and assuring them that they had nothing to fear. He did, however, indicate that he would contact the Government of India for an answer.[31]

Williamson attempted to reduce the danger by telegraphing the Panchen Lama on 10 September 1935 that "it would be unwise to bring any officers or soldiers from outside as this would not be at all good for Tibet."[32] On 23 September, the Panchen Lama in turn requested Williamson to ask the Tibetan government to accept his demands in full. Williamson on 28 September was able to tell the Panchen Lama that the Tibetan government had met all his demands except three: control of an army, control of additional districts, and the Chinese escort and officials. Williamson urged the Panchen to accept this compromise. On 3 November 1935, the Panchen answered very strangely, stating that "the Tibetan Government's statement that I wish to bring Chinese officials and soldiers with me is untrue. This is not one of the points in my demands." He remained unyielding, telling Williamson, "I would request that the British Government may be kind enough to bring the differences between the Tibetan Government and the Labrang to a definite settlement in accordance with the list of demands which I have already made."[33]

In the meantime, Delhi and London were considering how to re-

30. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, extract from Chinese Government *Gazetteer*, no. 1837. Translation is from Kuo Min News Agency, 10 September, 1935. Sikang was the newly created province that included Chinese-held Kham.

31. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from F. W. Williamson to the Government of India, dated 14 October 1935.

32. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, B. Gould's report on the 1935 Williamson mission.

33. Ibid.

spond to Williamson's urgent telegrams asking what Britain would do if fighting occurred and stating his fear that Tibet would back down if the British did not offer support. Britain, though absolutely unwilling to provide military support, was persuaded that it was extremely important to settle the Panchen Lama situation permanently and to avoid having Chinese troops and officials housed in Tashilhunpo. Thus Williamson was informed that Britain would diplomatically, but as forcefully as possible, pursue with China the Tibetan demands for withdrawal of the Chinese escort.

In early November 1935, Williamson was authorized to tell the Tibetans that the British ambassador in China had made a strong representation to the Chinese government emphasizing that the dispatch of troops as an escort to Tibet against the wishes of the Tibetan government "would cause legitimate concern to His Majesty's Government, who would be bound to take strong exception to it." Williamson also told them that Britain was hopeful of success and that, therefore, Tibet should not revise its present attitude.[34] The Tibetan government expressed their gratitude to Williamson and declared their intention of holding to their refusal to permit the entry of Chinese troops and officials with the Panchen Lama.

The Chinese reaction to the British diplomatic position turned out to be less than encouraging. A. Cadogan in Nanking reported that on 9 November the Chinese vice-minister for foreign affairs confirmed China's intention of sending an escort of 300 men, in accordance, he said, with the Panchen Lama's request. The vice-minister also said that a larger force had originally been contemplated but that the Chinese government reduced it in deference to the representations made some months ago by the Tibetan government. He went on to insist that these troops were really a bodyguard for the protection and prestige of the Panchen Lama and were not intended to remain in Tibet. The escort would also perhaps be accompanied by one civil official who would not remain in Tibet. Cadogan strongly protested against this plan.[35] About

34. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from the Government of India to F. W. Williamson and Battye, dated 11 November 1935.

35. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from A. Cadogan to His Majesty's Government, dated 11 November 1935.

three weeks later, on 29 November, the Chinese government replied formally to Cadogan that (1) "as regards alleged Tibetan objections to the escort, Huang Mu-sung when in Lhasa mentioned to Tibetan authorities that a bodyguard would be sent to escort the Panchen Lama, and they raised no objection, and (2) the escort will not consist of 'troops' but will be a bodyguard under a civil officer."[36]

The British again responded very strongly on 20 December 1935:

> Whatever might have been the attitude of the Tibetan Government when the matter was mentioned by Huang in 1934 their present attitude is one of strong opposition to the escort and also to the despatch of Chinese officials to accompany the Panchen Lama to Tibet. The Chinese Government's insistence upon their proposals in the face of Tibetan objections may well give rise to a difficult situation between China and Tibet. In view of the interest which certain other countries are taking in Tibet and the presence of communists on the China-Tibet frontier, the present moment is ill chosen for actions tending to antagonise Tibet. Moreover it is surely desireable for the maintenance of good relations between Great Britain and China for the latter to work to an agreed policy with His Majesty's Government in a country which had a vital interest for both. The matter is one to which His Majesty's Government attaches importance having regard to clearly expressed wishes of the Tibetan Government to the danger which might result from Chinese action in opposition to those wishes and they hope that the Chinese Government will not pursue the course which might in the circumstances lead to unfortunate complications.[37]

Cadogan verbally informed the Chinese that 300 fully armed troops could hardly be regarded as purely ceremonial and that the prestige of a religious figure such as the Panchen Lama did not demand this sort of show. He argued further that since the Panchen Lama did not have such an escort when he traveled in China, he should not need one to return to Tibet. The lama's safety could be insured by a party of his own Tashilhunpo people who would meet him at the border.[38]

36. Ibid.
37. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, oral points made in accompaniment to an aide-mémoire presented to the Chinese on 30 December 1935. They were authorized in Foreign Office telegram no. 459.
38. Ibid.

The Chinese answered that the Panchen's escort could not be withdrawn, "since this would necessarily be construed as an act of grave discourtesy to the Tashi Lama and would be calculated to provoke resentment in Tibet." When Cadogan asked how the absence of an escort could provoke resentment when the Tibetans did not want one, the Chinese vice-minister insisted that they had received no word from Tibet to this effect and that the reports of Tibetan protest were probably exaggerations.[39]

This issue led the British to wonder briefly whether they were being duped by the Tibetans, who could not provide any dates for their alleged protests. At London's request, Basil Gould pressed the Tibetan government to specify when their protests were actually made. By late January 1936, the Tibetans had traced the documents and passed them along to the British, who continued to pursue the issue vigorously in China. Cadogan again met the Chinese vice-minister for foreign affairs and this time challenged him with the dates and names the Tibetans had provided. According to Cadogen, the Chinese official was visibly shaken but repeated that the Tibetans had never protested. He also denied that the Panchen Lama had ever given any indication that he did not desire the escort.[40]

In the meantime, tragedy befell the British mission. Soon after his arrival in Lhasa, Williamson became ill and by November he was in critical condition. The British wanted to evacuate him quickly and asked the Tibetan government for permission to land a plane on flatlands below Sera monastery. The Tibetan National Assembly refused, offering instead to provide bearers to *carry* Williamson back to Sikkim. The reasons behind this reveal the new leadership's lack of confidence. First, the government feared that the monks of Sera would riot and stone the airplane and any military guard stationed there. Second, in the past the Tibetan government had consistently refused Chinese government applications to establish an air service between China and Lhasa, saying that planes had never landed in Tibet and they did not

39. IOR, L/PS/12/4186, telegram from A. Cadogan to His Majesty's Government, dated 4 January 1936.

40. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from A. Cadogan to His Majesty's Government, London, dated 4 February 1936.

want to set a precedent. If they now permitted the British to land, they feared it would be difficult later to refuse the Chinese. This decision actually made no difference because the Royal Air Force ultimately concluded that their planes could not take off at Lhasa's high altitude (roughly 12,000 feet). Meanwhile Williamson's condition worsened, and on 18 November 1935 he died of chronic uremia.[41] Captain Battye, the Gyantse trade agent, who was in Lhasa with the mission, now took command.

A few weeks later, information reached Tibet that a contingent of 300 Chinese soldiers had left Nanking to join the Panchen Lama at Kumbum and accompany him to Tibet in the coming year. On hearing this news, the Tibetan National Assembly passed another resolution stating that if the Panchen Lama tried to enter Tibet with a Chinese and Mongolian escort he would be opposed by force.[42] The Tibetan government telegraphed this decision to the Chinese government on 21 December,[43] but they remained unsure of their ability to stop a concerted Chinese advance and repeatedly tried to obtain British assurances of military assistance. Battye commented: "The uppermost thought in their minds very often seemed to be fear of Chinese aggression and *more than once our material assistance was asked for in the form of a military force to oppose the Chinese should the need arise.*"[44]

Just before his departure in November, Battye met with the Tibetan government to discuss the Panchen Lama issue. The Tibetans reiterated that they had agreed to restore practically all the property that had been in the Panchen Lama's possession at the time he fled, but that they could not compromise on the military issue or on the additional districts he had demanded; most important, they would not allow a Chinese military escort to enter Tibet. Battye then met with the Panchen's two envoys and told them that he considered the Tibetan government's

41. IOR, L/PS/12/4175 (PZ 8278/35).

42. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, Battye to the Government of India, dated 16 December 1935.

43. FO371/20221, summary of telegram from the Tibetan government to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 11 January 1935, as cited in a telegram from the Government of India to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 13 January 1936. This telegram also states that the Tibetan National Assembly sent a parallel telegram directly to the Panchen Lama.

44. IOR, L/PS/12/4175 (PZ 2040/36) (emphasis added).

terms very reasonable and that the remaining differences were slight and could be settled in person after the Panchen's return. Battye also sent a lengthy telegram to this effect to the Panchen Lama, but he received no reply.

At their final meeting with Battye, the Kashag explained their position on the suzerainty issue. Trimön, speaking for the other shapes, told Battye on 14 November 1935:

> Last year General Huang Mu-sung while in Tibet pressed the Tibetan Government to admit Chinese suzerainty outwardly. The Tibetan Government replied that they would be prepared to, provided the Chinese would surrender to them certain territory, namely Derge and Nyarong, on their Eastern frontier, while as regards the administration of their internal affairs Tibet would remain free and untrammelled by China.
>
> Derge and Nyarong have not been surrendered to Tibet and the Tibetan Government now refuse to acknowledge Chinese suzerainty either in theory or in fact.[45]

Thus, by the time of Battye's departure, Britain had come to play an important mediating role. The regent in fact asked Battye to have the British government "bring pressure to bear" on the Panchen Lama to accept the government's offer.[46]

1936: A YEAR OF CONFRONTATION

As 1935 came to a close, the Panchen Lama and his followers still seemed intent on returning to Tibet with their private army and Chinese military escort. A letter sent by the Panchen Lama to Chiang Kaishek on 11 March 1935 reveals both the Panchen's strongly pro-Chinese views and his somewhat inflated view of his own future role in Tibet. After telling Chiang that his discussions with the Tibetan government had, by and large, settled the important matters, he urged Chiang to try to settle the outstanding issues between China and Tibet

45. IOR, L/PS/12/4175, letter from Battye to the Government of India, dated 16 December 1935.

46. IOR, L/PS/12/4175 (PZ 311/36).

(since the Tibetan government was using this as a reason for not agr ing to allow his Chinese escort to accompany him). He also wrote:

> Concerning gradually implementing propaganda which will make the local people grateful [to China], recently I went to Kham via Amdo and [suggest to you] that all the monasteries which have been damaged should be repaired. Also all those monks who are just wandering around should be collected together [in monasteries] and monastic wealth and rules should be improved. The people's misery should also be eliminated. By acting honest in such ways, the five races will become harmonious and the people will be grateful—I think that this is a good thing. [I also think that] the party and nation should make it clear to the border people that you consider them lovingly and protectively, and I hope that China will allocate funds and divide them among the poor people of the borderlands.
>
> Concerning plans for the development of Tibet: . . . If I, the Panchen, return to Tibet, first and foremost I plan to build a much needed road between Amdo, Kham and Central Tibet (Ütsang). After this, I shall establish telegraph and postal communications between the important district headquarters (*dzong*). Then I shall establish primary schools in which Tibetan written language will be taught together with Chinese language and science. Finally, according to schedule, youth will be selected and sent to China for complete education. This is my plan. In order to accomplish such tasks I estimate that the government [i.e., the Kuomintang] will have to provide about one million Chinese dollars. I hope the government will make preparations for these funds. If the government orders the Education and Communications Offices to send experts and teachers to help in this work, I will welcome them. Concerning the need to make definite preparations to return to Tibet: whatever the manner of my returning to Tibet, for the purpose of showing the grandeur of the nation [China], it is necessary for me to take along an honor guard of protective troops. Because of this, the government should prepare their uniforms and select soldiers who are well disciplined so that when we go along the road we will look magnificent. This is my hope.[47]

We have seen, however, that despite the Panchen's optimism the betan government categorically opposed the Panchen's military esco

47. Ya 1986: 848–50. Ya cites the Pan chen rin po che'i gsung 'bum. Ellipses are Ya's quotation.

Thus, an armed confrontation seemed a distinct possibility if the Panchen tried to force his return with the escort.

On 10 January 1936, Tibet received a reply to the telegrams they had sent in December. Signed by Huang Mu-sung, the head of the Chinese Mongolian and Tibetan Office, it said that a Chinese bodyguard of troops and officials had been sent to the Panchen Lama in Amdo (Tsinghai), thus implying that they would be accompanying the Panchen to Tibet. It also tried to assuage Tibetan fears by saying that this force would cause no trouble in Tibet.[48]

Beginning early in 1936, reports began to pour into Lhasa that the Panchen Lama had started back to Tibet. Some reports indicated that he had sent baggage to Tashilhunpo overland, while others reported that he had left Kumbum monastery in Amdo and moved to Labrang, whence he was to continue to Jyekundo and then Tibet (see Map 4).

These reports were soon confirmed by a letter the Panchen had sent to the Tibetan government just before he left Kumbum monastery. It stated that he was returning to Tashilhunpo, his seat of power in Tibet, with a regiment of bodyguards, and requested that the Tibetan government issue an order that all subjects along the route assist them. This news led to an emergency meeting of the National Assembly at which it was decided to send two special envoys, Doring Teiji and Khencung Jampa Chöwang, to Jyekundo to meet the Panchen and accompany him back to Tashilhunpo. The Tibetan government continued to refuse to permit a Chinese military bodyguard.[49]

The Panchen's journey from Kumbum was delayed somewhat because of the sudden emergence of Chinese Communist forces in Kham in mid-May 1936. These troops had been driven out of Hunan in 1935 by the Nationalist forces and, after breaking into smaller groups, had fled northward through Kweichow, Yunnan, and then Szechuan Province. Although constantly pushed north and west, they won a number of victories and during May and June they held most of Kham, including Litang and Derge. At one point it was not clear whether the pursuing Nationalist troops would force the Communist troops to move

48. FO371/20221, telegram from the Government of India to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 13 January 1936.
49. Ibid.

into Tibet proper, but in the end they headed northward rather tha westward into Tibet.

This episode first alarmed the Tibetan government and then raise its confidence, for in the wake of the Communist forces, Tibetan troop crossed the Yangtse River and occupied Derge and a number of sub areas within it. Chiang Kai-shek wired to the Tibetan Kashag to expres surprise at the report of Tibetan troops entering Derge. He requeste an explanation of this violation of the 1932 agreement, indicating tha such an action would detract from the prospects of successful negotia tions for the settlement of major issues. The Tibetan government re plied that the governor-general in Kham, Trentong, had had no autho rization for the action and that they were making inquiries.[50] B December, the Tibetan forces had withdrawn to their previous bound ary on the west bank of the Yangtse River, but the incident revealed t Tibet the disorganization and weakness of the Nationalist Chinese i the Kham area and suggested to them that China would have to con solidate its position east of the Yangtse before it could think of movin against Tibet.

The year 1936 also saw a second British mission visit Lhasa. In earl February 1936, Basil Gould, Williamson's replacement as political offi cer in Sikkim, had been informed by Tsa Serkhang that the Panche Lama intended to return to Tibet that coming summer. The volatilit of the situation led Gould and the Government of India to propose t London that the Government of India intervene in the dispute betwee the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama by *guaranteeing a final agree ment.*

The essence of this plan was described by London in a letter to Cad ogan in China asking for his opinion:

> 1. The GOI considers that although the Tashi Lama is under Chinese influence he is anxious to spend his last years at Shigatse [Tashilhunpo] in peace. They believe his peaceful return would strengthen the position of the present Tibetan Government and therefore implement our policy of preserving an autonomous and friendly government in Tibet. This object cannot, however, be attained until the questions of the Chinese

50. IOR, L/PS/12/4182, letter from the Government of India to His Majesty Government, dated 24 October 1936, repeating a telegram from B. Gould.

escort and the Tashi Lama's demands are disposed of and on these there is a possibility of compromise if we take active steps to promote it. The GOI contemplates that in return for future concessions by the Lhasa Government the Tashi Lama might accept a Tibetan instead of Chinese escort.

2. The Government of India proposes to send Rai Bahadur [Norbhu Döndup] to Lhasa to (1) inform the Tibetan Government that HMG are exerting strong pressure at Nanking on the question of the escort but that efforts are being hampered by the continued assertion of the Chinese Government that no direct protest from Lhasa has been received, and (2) to state that Gould is ready, if the Tibetan Government agrees, to send a letter to the Panchen Lama.

3. In this letter Gould would stress the Tibetan Government's objections to the Chinese escort and their willingness to provide a Tibetan escort and would repeat the suggestion that the remaining differences in regard to the Tashi Lama's demands could best be settled after his return. The letter would then refer to the Tashi Lama's request for mediation by HMG and would state that HMG are prepared to give Gould full powers to act and sign as guarantor or mediator between the Tibetan Government and the Tashi Lama. Gould would offer to meet the Tashi Lama anywhere within Tibet and himself conduct His Serenity to his palace in Tashilhunpo.[51]

51. A draft of the proposed letter said: "To: His Serenity the Tashi Lama, Kumbum Palace. I learn with regret that in spite of the strong protests of the Tibetan Government the Nanking Government insists that on your return to Tibet you should be accompanied by a Chinese escort of three hundred troops. You yourself informed my predecessor Mr. Williamson that this escort was not one of your demands. Tibet is not a nation which desires to fight but is the lover of peace and of the religion of which you are now the sole head and leader. The Tibetan Government while anxious to welcome back Your Serenity at a time when your presence would be of great value to your religion and your country is preparing to resist the entry of the Chinese escort. It would be a melancholy event if your return should be stained with bloodshed for which you would be responsible. You have repeatedly requested the help of my predecessors and of myself in connection with your return. The matter has been discussed fully with the Tibetan Government and to a large extent your demands have been met. But greater than any of the demands which you made is the love of your countrymen which will be yours if you return in peace. If you come without a Chinese escort I shall be in a position to attempt to settle matters amicably.

"Recently I was pleased to meet your representative Kusho Tsa Serkhang and have sent a similar message by him. I am one of the few remaining who met Your Serenity in days which have now long passed.

"If you desire that I should be a witness regarding the terms under which you will return please inform me. I will then inform the Tibetan Government of your wish.

4. To assist the Tibetan Government making further concessions to the Panchen, Gould could offer them favors such as grants of free transit of goods through India and the training of Tibetan military officers in India.[52]

This very strong recommendation was considerably watered down over the next few months. Cadogan thought it was a good idea in general, but he wanted the initiative to appear to come from the Tibetan government. He suggested that the Tibetans be asked to send a letter requesting British mediation.

The British Foreign Office had more fundamental reservations. They strongly objected to Britain acting as a guarantor and wanted even mention of future mediation to be limited to the lifetime of this Panchen Lama. Furthermore, the offer of mediation was to be conditional on the Panchen Lama's return without the Chinese escort. They also wanted it to be made clear to the Panchen Lama that Gould would meet him with Tibetan troops, not British ones, and that the negotiations would only begin when he reached Lhasa, where he would meet with the Tibetan government. On 3 June 1936, a telegram of approval was sent from London to Delhi stating these changes and authorizing Norbhu Döndup to go to Lhasa to discuss them with the Tibetan government.

Norbhu Döndup reached Lhasa on 26 June. Several weeks later he notified Gould that the Tibetan government did not want British mediation. In a subsequent telegram he stated: "They [the Tibetan government] categorically say that they do not want the GOI to intervene in the dispute which is a matter of Tibetan internal affairs. they claim to have sent a deputation to the Tashi Lama to bring him back to Lhasa."[53] The Kashag even refused to send a written invitation to Gould to visit Tibet, saying that since Norbhu Döndup had come with only an oral message, their message to Gould would also be only oral.

[signed] Political Officer in Sikkim." (FO371/20221, draft telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to His Serenity the Tashi Lama, Kumbum Palace, ca. 13 January 1936).

52. IOR, L/PS/12/4181, letter from His Majesty's Government to the chargé d'affaires in Peking.

53. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from B. Gould to the Government of India, dated 3 August 1936.

The Tibetans explained that they were on the verge of coming to an agreement with the Panchen Lama and therefore did not want Gould's intervention at this stage but would discuss the situation with him after he arrived in Lhasa. The Tibetan government did, however, agree to write to the Chinese government a formal letter of protest about the escort that would be transmitted via the British.

The religious sector in Lhasa had felt strongly, and Reting, the regent, had concurred, that the government should do whatever was necessary to effect the Panchen Lama's return. Because of this, the Tibetan government had decided to make further concessions to the Panchen that would render British mediation unnecessary. On 15 July 1936, the government gave the Panchen's envoys two letters for transmission by telegraph to him. One letter, from the regent, the lönchen, and the Kashag, stated that a bad impression had been made by the Panchen Lama's failure to reply to the previous request not to bring "even one Chinese official or soldier" or any warlike stores. However, the letter also indicated new concessions, including the willingness of the Tibetan government to surrender all properties that belonged to the *previous* Panchen Lamas and to return all property belonging to those officials now with the current Panchen Lama (i.e., not just movable property, as previously offered). The latter properties were to be distributed in accordance with the Panchen Lama's wishes. Also, a Tibetan army escort consisting of whatever units the Panchen might prefer would be sent to escort him on Tibetan soil. This meant he could choose one that consisted of soldiers from his region of Tsang. The letter reiterated, however, that the Tibetan government could not concede control over Shigatse District or permit the Panchen Lama to control his own military force. The second letter, from the abbots of the Three Seats, said much the same but also assured the Panchen Lama that they would guarantee his safety and mentioned that the monastic representatives they had sent to meet him had arrived at Labrang monastery in Kansu.[54] Instructions were sent to the Tibetan governor-general in Kham informing him that he should provide all needed accommodations for the Panchen

54. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, letter from Norbhu Döndup to B. Gould, dated 15 July 1936, cited in telegram from B. Gould to the Government of India, dated 30 September 1936.

Lama but should not permit his Chinese escort to enter Tibet. He informed the Panchen Lama of this in December 1936.

Although the British idea of mediation now had to be scrapped, Gould was sent with new instructions "to explore the situation generally, to advise the Tibetan Government against over-optimism, and to impress on them the need for strengthening their own position by making peace with the Tashi Lama and reorganizing their army and finances." To this was added, "To these ends we were prepared to help them with instructions for their fighting forces, if they wanted it, and with Customs concessions."[55] Gould's staff included Brigadier Neame of the Eastern Command, who was to advise on military matters, and two officers of the Royal Signals, who were in charge of operating a wireless transmitter.[56]

The situation regarding the Panchen worsened when a large advance shipment of baggage to Tibet was discovered by alert Tibetan border guards to contain rifles, hand grenades, and ammunition. They confiscated the baggage at the border checkpost at Nagchuka in mid-July.[57] The Panchen responded arrogantly to the Tibetan government's note of 15 July, saying nothing at all about the government's new offer and concentrating solely on protesting the government's seizure of his arms. These events revived suspicions regarding the Panchen Lama's intentions and strengthened the lay-official's firm position against the monks' softer views.

Though rejecting direct British mediation, the Tibetan government continued to press the British to apply diplomatic pressure on the Chinese to withdraw the escort. To counter the Chinese government's continual assertion that Tibet had never formally protested their plan to

55. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 3 August 1936, and telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 30 September 1936.

56. The information on the Gould mission and the Neame study of the Tibetan army comes from IOR, L/PS/12/4193, Lhasa Mission 1936, Diary of Events, part IV (written by B. Gould), and FO371/20222, Neame's Military Recommendations to be made to the Government of Tibet, dated Lhasa, 8 September 1936. This mission included H. E. Richardson, the Gyantse trade agent.

57. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, repeating Norbhu Döndup's telegram from Lhasa in a telegram from the Government of India to the secretary of state, London, dated 21 July 1936.

send a Chinese escort, the British in turn pressed Lhasa to restate their opposition in a written note which the British would themselves present to the Chinese government. On 17 July 1936, the Tibetans produced such a note, signed by the Kashag and addressed to General Huang Mu-sung. It began:

> We, the Ministers of Tibet, send this letter to inform you that, while (we) are glad that His serenity the Tashi Lama will shortly return to Tibet, we are, on the other hand, informed that the Chinese Government is sending Chinese officials and 300 troops to carry flags and to escort the Tashi Lama to Tibet. In view of the fact that the outstanding Chinese-Tibetan question has not been settled, we cannot allow Chinese officials and troops to enter Tibet. Both parties have been maintaining officers and troops to guard their respective frontiers. We have repeatedly sent detailed wireless messages to various officers of the Chinese Government asking them not to send officers and men to Tibet.[58]

Two months later, the Kashag contacted Gould and told him that earlier they had been confident that the Panchen could not refuse their new terms and had not wanted to bother the British unnecessarily, but because the Panchen had not yet replied to their offer, they hoped that, should the necessity arise, the British would still be willing to mediate directly.[59] A week later, the Kashag told Gould that they still did not want British mediation but that they might need it later. They indicated that they were anxious for the British to apply strong diplomatic support in China and reiterated that they would oppose the Chinese escort by force but were afraid that this would lead to a war with China.[60]

At this time, Neame made a thorough assessment of the Tibetan army.

58. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, letter of the Government of India to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 22 July 1936. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs at first refused to accept this letter from the British ambassador in Nanking because in their view Tibet was not a foreign country, but they accepted it when it was presented to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Office rather than the Foreign Office.

59. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 30 September 1936.

60. IOR, L/PS/4186B, telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 10 October 1936. Ya (1986: 857) states that these monastic repre-

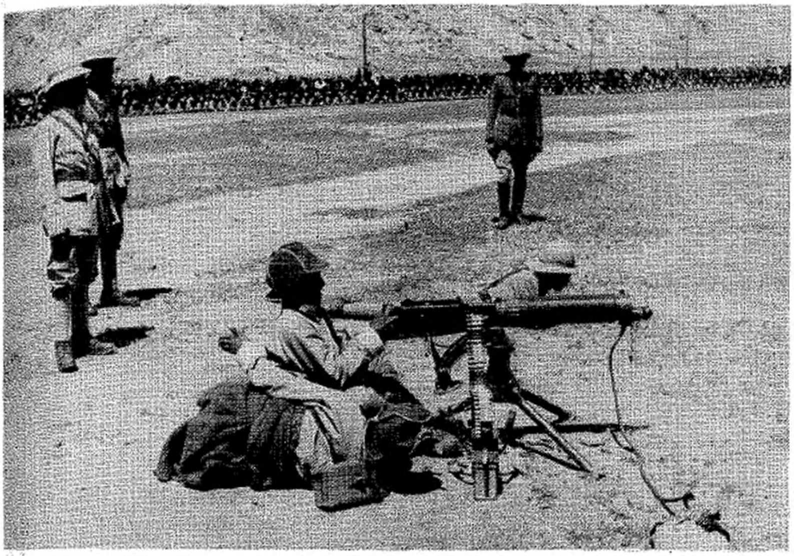
THE TIBETAN ARMY IN 1936

In discussions Neame held with the two commanders-in-chief and a variety of other army commanders and government officials, he learned that the primary task of the Tibetan army at this time was the protection of Tibet's eastern border.[61] In mid-1936, there were about 5,000 regular troops in Eastern Tibet (nine regular regiments) and eleven regiments of militia, each with about 500 men, making a total of about 10,000 regular and militia troops. These were located in roughly twenty discrete detachments strung along the frontier. However, since there was no fighting in Eastern Tibet, a large percentage of the regular troops were actually on indefinite home leave. Neame's report astutely noted that this was "presumably to save the expense of feeding them."

These troops had 4 mountain guns, but 3 had been stolen by Pandatsang Tobgye in 1934 (see Chapter 5) and their condition was doubtful. There were 6 good Lewis guns and about 5,000 good Lee-Enfield .303 rifles that the regular troops used. The militia had some old .303

sentatives met the Panchen at Labrang in Amdo in June of 1936 and gave him a letter from the Kashag that said, "Since the Dalai Lama died, all the Tibetan people, monk and lay, old and young, male and female, are praying for the speedy return of the Panchen Lama. Moreover, we have sincerely sent representatives to welcome you. Therefore, we hope you will soon return to Tibet. We have been able to accept the conditions governing your return in the main, so you should not worry about these issues. [However], before the outstanding issues between China and Tibet are settled, we hope you will not bring the Chinese and Mongolian troops and officials, since to do so will bring harm to the Tibetan joint secular-religious form of government. Because this is the wish of all the Tibetan people, if you do not accept this, we have definitely decided to block your return. For the purpose of avoiding disturbances between China and Tibet, even if China decides to send an escort of Chinese and Mongolian troops and officials, they will not be allowed to set one foot beyond the Tibetan border. Rimpoche, if you need a bodyguard of soldiers, it is acceptable for you to pick an escort from among the Tibetan soldiers of your native Tsang who will escort you as soon as you reach the Tibetan border." The Panchen's officials translated this into Chinese and sent it along to the Chinese government with the following comment: "The Kashag's letter is only the view of a few individuals—it is definitely not the general view of the people. . . . In accordance with the Panchen's previous plan, next year at the start of spring we will return to Tibet. Consequently, we hope that China will put into practice the previous plan and see it through to the end. If next spring when we reach the Tibetan border we find Tibetan government troops blocking our way, we are confident that China will do whatever is necessary in retaliation." Several months later, in December 1936, a second group of welcoming officials, this time led by a senior monk official, brought the Panchen another warning that he must not bring a Chinese military escort with him.

61. The lay commander-in-chief was Cangra; the monk commander-in-chief appears to have been Temba Jayan.



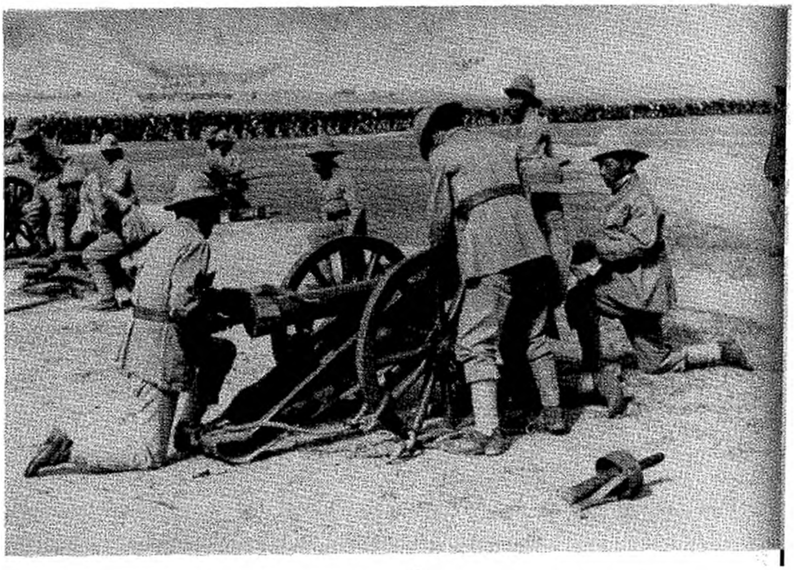
28.

Tibetan army demonstrating machine guns in Lhasa (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

and a motley collection of other foreign guns and old Tibetan rifles. They had no machine guns.

In Lhasa, there were only the 600 troops of the Bodyguard Regiment, 400 armed police, and 300 soldiers from regiments stationed in Kham who were learning to use mountain guns. There were 6 mountain guns in Lhasa (2 of which Neame thought were dangerous to fire), 2 good Lewis guns, and 5,000 modern rifles with the Bodyguard Regiment. The Tibetan government had about 4,000 new rifles in the armory at Trapchi, as well as 4 machine guns (see Figures 28 and 29). A few regular troops were stationed on the Nepal border; all the other districts, including those bordering Ladakh, were defended entirely by militias with ancient matchlock rifles.

Cangra, the commander-in-chief, told Neame that the Tibetans had tried to manufacture ammunition for the .303 rifles but had stopped



29.

Tibetan army demonstrating ten-pound mountain guns in Lhasa (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

because they frequently exploded and injured the soldiers. He said that all military training and activity had lapsed after the death of the Dalai Lama, although some interest in revitalizing the army was again emerging. He assessed the principal weaknesses of the military in Tibet as follows:

> First and foremost he [Cangra] complained that the army Officers are continuously being transferred to civil jobs, and ignorant and inexperienced civilians appointed to military Commands. This is especially the case in times of peace, when Officers even if left with the troops are burdened with many civil tasks, and the troops instead of being allowed to train, are generally employed on civil works and coolie tasks. . . .
>
> [Cangra's own history shows this since] he was first appointed a Depon [Commander] at the age of 48, having held only civil appointments previously. Two years ago, at the age 56 he was appointed Commander-

> in-Chief. And he frankly bemoaned the fact that he had no experience and although he realized many reforms were required and many things required doing in the army, he did not know how to begin.
>
> His second big complaint was that practice in target firing is practically never allowed for guns, machine guns, Lewis guns or rifles. In consequence, when the troops go into action they are entirely useless at firing their weapons, and squander ammunition to no purpose.[62]

It is interesting to note that procuring ammunition from the arsenal was a very elaborate and difficult task. All the ammunition was sealed in a room and none could be issued without the attendance of the lönchen, the Kashag, and the commander-in-chief (or, more likely, their assistants).

The organization of the army in the field was also criticized. Neame wrote, "From consideration of sound strategy it is unwise to have all the available troops extended along a wide stretch of frontier with no reserves behind to reinforce any threatened point. Further it is difficult to ensure that troops receive any training if they are scattered on frontier duty."[63] Moreover, the troops in Kham were scattered under different commanders who received operating orders, not from any superior commander in Kham, but from Lhasa. The Kashag had authorized its two commissioners in Kham to make urgent decisions, but all routine matters were referred to the Military Department or the Kashag in Lhasa.[64]

The financial strain caused by the army is apparent in orders, issued only a short time earlier, that prevented the troops from "living on and battening on the local villages in Kham." Simultaneously, the salary of the soldiers was raised from Rs. 1.60 per month to Rs. 4.00 per month in Kham and to Rs. 3.00 per month in Lhasa. Their rations comprised about a pound of unhusked barley per day and some butter, salt, and tea.[65]

62. When a military drill exhibition was staged for Neame in Lhasa, Neame discovered that it had been six years since any of the Lhasa soldiers had fired their rifles.

63. FO371/20222, Neame's Recommendations.

64. Ibid. Appointment of an overall commander was tried in 1932 when Khyungram was placed in command of all troops in Kham. This resulted in internal conflict among the commanders and was not repeated.

65. Ibid.

Neame ended with a highly unfavorable impression of the state the Tibetan military:

> It is clearly apparent that the Tibetans as a nation are absolutely unmilitary, all their thoughts and energies are devoted to their religious life. The Tibetan Government has absolutely no idea of military organization, administration or training. The military authorities even if they had the knowledge, have no power to apply it. The troops are untrained, unreliable, and unpopular with the country. The Tibetan Official hierarchy are quite indiscriminately pitchforked into civil or military jobs regardless of their qualifications. No regular soldier of experience can rise beyond the rank of Rupon, a lower grade of commissioned officer.
>
> In fact, it is justifiable to say that, except for the fact that they possess a certain number of modern weapons, which few of them know how to use, the army has advanced but little from its condition in 1904.[66]

Although Neame overemphasized the devotion of Tibetans to "re gious life" and failed to realize that what he saw was the deterioratic of an earlier, stronger army force, his assessment was devastating. Tl Tibetan army was not "sufficently trained either in the use of the weapons or in tactics of attack and defence to enable them to resist determined advance by even a moderately efficient army."[67]

If Neame's ideas for rectifying this situation had been put into pra tice the course of Tibetan history would have been changed. He su gested that:

1. The Tibetan government collect a body of troops at some central place where they would be available to reinforce any part of the frontier that was threatened. This planning would have to be accomplished *before* any outbreak of war.

2. This unit should be treated as an elite corps, to be trained thoroughly in all weapons and in offense and defense.

3. After this unit was completely trained, the standards for all troops should be improved by arranging periodic relief between units of this force and those in Kham. The first relief of a unit from Kham should take place after two years. Thereafter, one regiment would be relieved and retrained annually. Under this

66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.

plan the entire regular amy could be retrained in the elite unit over a period of about seven years.

4. The size of this unit would be roughly that of a brigade—a little over 3,000 men. It was recommended that it should be formed from existing units on the frontier: (a) Brigade Headquarters under a commander and two or three staff officers, with a number of mounted orderlies or foot soldiers for carrying orders; (b) a mounted infantry company of 200 men; (c) three regiments of riflemen, each with 800 men; (d) one battery of mountain guns consisting of four mountain guns and 150 to 200 men; and (e) one machine-gun company of six machine guns, six Lewis guns, and about 150 men.

5. The location of the Brigade Headquarters should ideally be somewhere like Chamdo, but Lhasa would be possible.

6. Morale, pride, discipline, and contentment would be critical elements for the success of this plan. The best officers and men should be put in the elite brigade and not be transferred frequently.

7. The unit's armaments should include the latest .303 rifles; four new ten-pound mountain guns, with 200 rounds of ammunition for each gun; five new Vickers .303 machine guns, three old machine guns (for practice), ten new .303 Lewis guns, and three old Lewis guns, with 6,000 rounds of ammunition for each machine gun and 4,000 rounds for each Lewis gun.[68]

8. There should be one set of wireless equipment for the elite brigade in the field and another set for Lhasa.

9. The officer corps of this brigade was critical. About fifteen officers, including nine commanders, should be trained in Waziristan on India's northwest frontier; since that terrain is similar to that of Tibet, they could learn appropriate tactics there. Junior officers and noncommissioned officers should receive training in Gyantse.

10. The military organization must be changed. As Neame put it, "If any good lasting results are to be obtained from the

68. The Tibetans had recently asked India for four mountain guns, four machine guns, and ten Lewis guns (ibid.).

> recommendations set out above, certain principles of military organization and training must be adhered to." He went on: the officers and men for the new unit must be "young, energetic and keen." It is essential to pick a first-class commander for the brigade and good assistants, all with experience of fighting. They should stay with the brigade for at least four years. Training must be continuous throughout the year. Units must be kept up to strength with fixed leaves of two to three months a year. Weapons training must be carried out every year, with 50 rounds per rifleman, 500 rounds per machine or Lewis gun, and 20 rounds per mountain gun. The soldiers should be well paid and well rationed. Soldiers must be made to clean their weapons and keep them in good working order. Daily inspections by noncommissioned officers and frequent ones by commanders are needed. The uniform should be of traditional Tibetan design and materials.[69]

Neame also felt strongly that Tibet would need the help of an outside military officer to perform inspections and give advice at regular intervals.

Neame presented this plan at a four-hour meeting with shapes Bönshö, Trentong, and Langcunga and two other British officers, Richardson and Norbhu Döndup. The Tibetans took detailed notes and then back-translated these to insure accuracy. Both Trentong and Bönshö told Neame that the military suggestions were feasible, although they might take some time to carry out and would have to be reported to the regent and the lönchen. They also inquired about financing for such changes, but were told to raise this issue with Gould.[70]

Although Gould strongly supported this plan, the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India was not at all enthusiastic about Gould's urging the Tibetan government to approve Neame's recommendations. In a telegram to the secretary of state for India in London, the department stated that Gould's recommendations for new weapons for Tibet had not been authorized, because the Government of India felt

69. Ibid.
70. IOR, L/PS/12/4193, Lhasa Mission 1936, Diary of Events.

serious doubts whether it is desirable to proceed further with the matter. These doubts arise not from any consideration of Chinese objections to supply, which could we presume be satisfactorily answered by reference to past policy, but rather from state of Lhasa Government and Tibetan Army as depicted by Gould and Neame. Impressions we have gathered from their reports, which in Neame's case has been supplemented by personal remarks, are as follows:

(a) Regent and Kashag are incapable of taking strong line about anything or of following any consistent policy except that of waiting on events.

(b) Tibetan army requires complete reorganization and elaborate training before it could be regarded as of any military value even if additional armament now asked for is supplied.[71]

Moreover, the Indian Foreign and Political Department reported that the General Staff in India was unable to undertake the elaborate training suggested by Neame and that, at best, only a small number of commissioned and noncommissioned officers could be trained. Finances were also mentioned as a difficulty. The Tibetan government already owed the Government of India 600,000 rupees for arms and ammunitions previously supplied, and the Indian Foreign and Political Department recommended to London that the Tibetans be made to pay cash on delivery for any new weapons. It went on:

We are by *no* means satisfied that it is in India's interest to have a well trained, well armed and highly organised army in Tibet. *Such an army might encourage the Lhasa Government to undertake adventures on the Tibetan Chinese frontier, which would cause further complications,* and, if we bring such an army into existence, we shall be committed not only to continual inspections on the military side but also to some responsibility for control of Tibet's foreign policy.

Although, therefore, we appreciate that Gould attaches much importance to this supply as a means of stiffening Tibetan Government resistance to Chinese influence and penetration, we cannot agree to do more than:

(1) offer supply on usual conditions of arms and ammunition for cash payment, and

71. FO371/20222, telegram from the Government of India to the secretary of state for India, dated 12 December 1936.

> (2) undertake to train *a few* instructors in India. We would be grateful for His Majesty's Government's approval to this course.[72]

Finally, they recommended that one wireless set—not two, as Neame suggested—be given if the Tibetans wanted it, but "it will then be maintained and worked by them and not by us."[73] This, of course, made it an impossibility.

Delhi need not have concerned itself with the Neame-Gould plan, for the Tibetan government decided that the proposed restructuring of the military would provoke a confrontation with the monastic segment and might lead to the emergence of a "military faction" like Tsarong's group in the 1920s. On 29 January 1937, when Gould met with the Kashag and offered them the limited training of military officers approved by Delhi and London, he reported that the Kashag met this offer "with due acknowledgement and with regret that preoccupations on the eastern frontier necessitated its postponement for the time being."[74] The issue was never again raised during Reting's regency. The legacy of the military-monastery conflict of the early 1920s still cast its shadow over Tibetan politics. Tibetans made excellent troops when properly led and armed, but the political implications of a modern and efficient army continued to threaten the religious elite and precluded the development of such a force. The Tibetan government continued purposely to maintain an ineffective army.

The Panchen Lama, meanwhile, had continued his journey to Tibet, arriving with his escort in Jyekundo in late November 1936. In that same month, Ngagchen Rimpoche, under orders from the Panchen Lama's office, requested customs exemptions from the Government of India for 400 packages, containing the property of the Panchen Lama and his followers, that were to be sent to Tibet via India.[75] With 1936 coming to a close and the Panchen Lama and his Chinese escort in Jyekundo, poised to enter Tibet, two very different initiatives were launched.

72. Ibid. (emphasis added).
73. Ibid.
74. FO371/20963, telegram from B. Gould in Lhasa to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 31 January 1937.
75. FO371/2022, telegram from B. Gould in Lhasa to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 14 November 1936.

Reting privately asked Phabongka Rimpoche, an eminent Gelugpa lama who happened to be in Kham giving religious teachings, to visit the Panchen Lama in Jyekundo and do what he could to speed his return. At the same time, Ngagchen Rimpoche, one of the Panchen's two envoys in Lhasa, returned to the Panchen's camp on his own to try to convince the Panchen to accept the Tibetan government's terms. He believed that the Tibetan government sincerely wanted to allow the Panchen Lama to return with dignity and was upset by the Panchen Lama's intransigence. As he put it, this problem was due "to bad influences of certain members of the Tashi Lama's entourage," an attitude he hoped personally to counteract. He added that the Panchen Lama "must realize that in the matter of his return, it is probably a case of "next year or never."[76] He met with the Panchen in late December but, tragically, failed to make him see reason; instead, he was relieved of his duty. The Phabongka initiative fared little better.

THE PHABONGKA MISSION

Phabongka Rimpoche left Chamdo about mid-January 1937 and met the Panchen Lama in Jyekundo. In keeping with Tibetan etiquette, they spoke only about religious topics, addressing the question of the Panchen's return to Tibet by means of notes written on the erasable slate message boards described earlier (see Figure 22).

The Panchen wrote that he desired to return to his monastery but that the Tibetan government insisted that his Chinese bodyguards not accompany him.[77] He felt he had been patient, hoping that the abbots and representatives of the Three Seats could make the government understand, but his departure could not be delayed further; Phabongka should convey this emphatically to the regent. He announced that influential officers of the Tibetan government would soon be meeting with his officials in a nearby monastery to discuss both his return and the overall problem between the labrang and the government. He

76. FO371/20221, telegram of the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 23 December 1936.

77. Pha bong kha (Phabongkha) 1981: 322–23.

hoped for a settlement, but he could not relinquish the bodyguards tl Chinese ordered him to take.

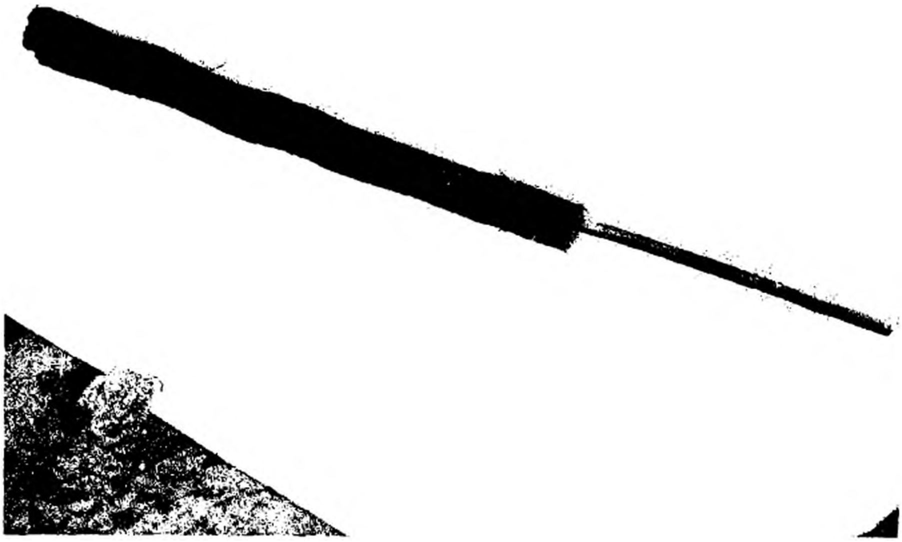
Phabongka replied that it was excellent that the Panchen was a tempting to clear up his misunderstanding with the government an return to Tibet. He blamed the attendants of the two great lamas fc fomenting and perpetuating the disagreement, but he also wrote th the fortunes of the people in general and the Gelugpa order in partici lar had become like ice rocks in spring (i.e., about to melt). He aske the Panchen not to lose hope but to continue to live for a long time an try to eliminate all the misunderstandings. He offered to do whatev he could to help.[78]

Phabongka then sent a strong message to Reting (and, it is said, t many others of his disciples and aristocratic students) in which he su ported the Panchen Lama's position:

> I went and met the Panchen Lama and made whatever requests I could. The Panchen is determined to go to Tashilhunpo as soon as possible so whatever the misunderstanding between the Government and the Panchen should be cleared. True understanding between the Government and the Panchen is actually the root of happiness and long life of Buddhism, and the Government's power depends on this. By keeping this in mind, you as Regent, please take the responsibility and make it easy for the Panchen Lama to go to Tashilhunpo. Not only that, but all your powerful friends in the government please advise them and make it clear for them to understand what is good for the future. . . . Please don't get angry at this letter.[79]

At about the same time that Phabongka visited the Panchen Lam the Kashag spoke with Gould about Chinese proposals for negotia tions. As before, the Kashag expressed doubts about the success of ne gotiations unless Britain acted as guarantor.[80] A week later the Kasha told Gould that since their many requests to the British to settle th Sino-Tibetan question had produced no result, they were serious thinking of sending a shape to China to discuss the escort and othe

78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.: 334.
80. IOR, L/PS/12/4194, telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Gov ernment of India in New Delhi, dated 29 January 1937.



30.

An "arrow letter" (dayik) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

major issues. The Kashag once again complained about the onerous costs of maintaining troops in Kham.[81]

About March 1937, while the Tibetan National Assembly was discussing some aspect of the Panchen's return, the Kashag received a copy of an "arrow letter" (see Figure 30) that had been sent by the Panchen's officials in China. It said: "From the Nangmagang [Office of the Panchen Lama] to the great monastery of Tashilhunpo, to all the District Officers on the way to Tashilhunpo *via Lhasa,* that they should prepare all the necessary arrangements to receive the Panchen Lama and his entourage."[82] The assembly was insulted by the tone of the letter and by the offhand mention of Lhasa, which failed to pay deference to

81. IOR, L/PS/12/4194, telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India in New Delhi, dated 7 February 1937.
82. Shakabpa, interview (emphasis added).

its importance as the capital of Tibet. Then, too, the Panchen Lam appeared to act as though there were no legitimate government in Tib and to issue whatever orders he wished. Furthermore, the letter ind cated that the Panchen was returning with an entourage that include 20 Chinese officials and 500 armed Chinese soldiers.[83] The infuriate officials in Lhasa erupted in indignant protest. Shakabpa, who was at tending that meeting of the assembly, recalls:

> Lukhang was sitting next to me. I don't remember his rank then [but] I was a tsipa at the time and maybe he was a Kashag's Secretary. Lukhang started to clear his throat several times and then said: "Such a detailed 'arrow letter' is not even sent for a Dalai Lama. Twenty officers and 500 Chinese soldiers will be coming with him to take absolute control of Tibet and we have to make all the arrangements to make their stay comfortable. It is blatantly outrageous and an affront. We should not allow under any circumstances these Chinese soldiers to cross into Tibet." There were certain government officers and abbots of monasteries who wanted the Panchen to come to Tibet even with the Chinese soldiers saying that the Panchen is a great Lama and we must make some consideration or he will not return. Lukhang started arguing with them individually. At about that time all the government officials started saying no we shouldn't let in the Chinese soldiers. . . The chipön [head of the Dalai Lama's stable] stood up and started crying and screaming at the delegates not to let in the Panchen Lama and then all the government officials unanimously and categorically came out against letting the soldiers come. Then the Assembly decided to make an extraordinary recommendation to the Kashag known as the "great oath" which would say that under no circumstances can the Chinese troops enter Tibet.[84]

The next day, after certain monastic representatives again raised ob jections to a total ban on the Chinese bodyguards, a group of govern ment officials proposed a compromise. If the Chinese bodyguards wer allowed to enter Tibet, there would have to be a written guarantee tha they would return to China via India after one month, with a thir

83. Ibid.

84. Shakabpa, interview. The "great oath" (in Tibetan: *mna' gan mthu mo che*) is th strongest document the assembly can send. It cannot be altered, since it requires, i addition to the seals of the assembly and the Three Seats, the seals of the Ganden Thrip and of the two tutors of the Dalai Lama, who do not usually attend the assembly meet ings.

country acting as witness to this agreement. If the Panchen Lama did not accept these terms, troops should be ordered to halt his entry into Tibet.[85]

Shortly after this, Reting Regent sent Phabongka a letter that commented on events in Lhasa. It said, in part:

> If I could do something like that [using my influence to get the assembly to let the Panchen in with his bodyguards], it would have been wonderful. However, recently there was a National Assembly meeting and they decided regarding the problems between the Government and the Labrang that we cannot just forget and leave these issues. And regarding the Chinese bodyguards, etc., it is not at all negotiable. This is a period when the Dalai Lama is not living [actually he had been born, but he had not yet been found] and they feel that Tashilhunpo is trying to take advantage of this situation so they decided not to let this happen. It was a final and firm decision so I am helpless. Please do not get angry.[86]

Phabongka's biography records his shock and anger: "Having so many people gathered and calling it an 'Assembly' without having intelligent people who can see what is good for the future creates more problems than it helps. Now it is impossible."[87]

But this was not the end of the matter. Negotiations continued between the Tibetan governor-general in Chamdo (Kham) and representatives of the Panchen Lama, and the Tibetan government continued to protest to the Chinese government about the escort. Similarly, in April 1937, the Kashag contacted H. E. Richardson, the head of the British Mission in Lhasa, asking that Britain "reinforce our protests to the Chinese Government," and in late May, the British did send another letter on Tibet's behalf to the Chinese minister for foreign affairs in Nanking.[88]

The discussions in Chamdo in May 1937 actually produced a proposal that the Panchen Lama and his Chinese escort should be allowed to return directly to Shigatse via the northern route, bypassing Lhasa and Central Tibet. The Tibetan government replied that they would

85. Shakabpa, 1967: 282.
86. Pha bong kha (Phabongka) 1981: 347.
87. Ibid.
88. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from H. E. Richardson to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 31 May 1937.

accept the idea only if the agreement were guaranteed by a foreign intermediary.[89] Consequently, in mid-May the Tibetan government prepared to fight to block the entry of the Chinese escort. It ordered 1,500 of its troops in Kham to take up defensive positions in Rongsum, southwest of Derge, and another 1,200 troops with five mountain guns to an area northwest of Dengo (see Map 5).[90]

On 17 July, a mounted messenger arrived from the Tibetan governor-general in Chamdo with an updated report: the Panchen wanted to start at once for Tibet and had asked the central government to withdraw its official in Tashilhunpo; he was insisting on bringing the Chinese escort, but he now promised to return the escort to China by sea within five months of their arrival at Shigatse; he would keep as sureties the representatives of Sera, Drepung, and Ganden who were with him; and he desired to visit Lhasa to discuss the various outstanding questions with the Tibetan government.[91]

A meeting of the Tibetan National Assembly was immediately called. It replied via the Chinese wireless: the Tibetan government would withdraw their administrator from Tashilhunpo as soon as the Panchen Lama returned to Shigatse; the Tibetan government agreed to the Chinese escort coming with the Panchen and then leaving by sea, so long as the pact was witnessed by an intermediary foreign power other than the monasteries and the Chinese; the Panchen Lama had no reason to come to Lhasa, but should settle all outstanding issues through the Tibetan governor-general in Chamdo before leaving. The Panchen should return to Tibet via Nagchuka on the northern route to Shigatse.[92]

In mid-August the Kashag felt confident enough that a solution was close at hand to ask the British in Lhasa to "report [to Delhi] immediately so that the Government of India may consider profoundly as to the best course of action to be taken by the Government of India."

89. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from H. E. Richardson to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 17 May 1937.

90. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, letter from Knatchbull-Hugessen, the British ambassador in Nanking, to His Majesty's Government, dated 15 May 1937.

91. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 21 July 1937; IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 14 August 1937.

92. Ibid.

Gould inquired as to what action they desired from the Government of India, but the shapes replied that they could not make any suggestions.[93] The Government of India considered the issue concluded. "They [the Tibetan government] did not make any specific suggestion or request. . . it was decided that, in view of the improbability of the Tashi Lama being allowed by his Chinese advisers to accept British witnesses of his guarantee, the Tibetan Government should be informed that His Majesty's Government could do no more than continue their diplomatic efforts."[94]

Shortly after this, on 30 August, another messenger from the Tibetan governor-general in Chamdo arrived with the news that the Panchen Lama had left Jyekundo for Lungshigön, a monastery within Tibetan territory, about fifty-two miles southeast of Jyekundo.[95] The National Assembly met the next day and ordered the mobilization of the Trapchi Regiment.[96] Fearing that the Panchen Lama might suddenly proceed straight to Shigatse without sending any further communications,[97] on 6 September the assembly decided to dispatch 500 troops of the Trapchi Regiment to Chamdo immediately. At the same time, the governor-general in Chamdo was ordered to welcome and escort the Panchen Lama to Shigatse if he were traveling without the escort, but otherwise to resist him.[98]

A few days later the Tibetan government received conflicting reports. Norbhu Döndup reported on 13 September that the Chinese official in Lhasa, Tsiang, had received a copy of wireless instructions that had been sent to the Panchen Lama by the Chinese government stating that, owing to the Sino-Japanese War which had started in June of that year, it was not advisable for the Panchen Lama to proceed to Tibet, as the Chinese government could not support him if the Tibetan

93. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 14 August 1937.

94. IOR, L/PS/20/D220, Richardson, Précis, 1945.

95. In a later telegram the Tibetan governor-general reported that the Panchen said no more than that he was going as far as this monastery.

96. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 4 September 1937.

97. They estimated that the journey to Shigatse would take him about one and a half months.

98. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 7 September 1937.

government's troops resisted him and the escort. These instructions suggested that the Panchen Lama stay in Chinese territory until the Sino-Japanese trouble had ended.[99]

At about the same time the Tibetan government received a wireless message from their officials with the Panchen Lama saying that the Panchen Lama and his escort were planning to proceed toward Tibet, but that no date had been set for departure. Similarly, the three Tibetan government representatives in Nanking met with Chiang Kai-shek to convey to him Tibet's position that he need not send Chinese troops to accompany the Panchen Lama. Chiang said nothing about changing his plans and scolded them, saying, "The Panchen Lama himself also needs a little freedom."[100] On 16 September the National Assembly recommended sending a shape to Lungshigön monastery to try to persuade the Panchen Lama to return to Tibet without the escort. This proposal was approved by the Kashag and awaited action by the regent.[101]

At this juncture the Sera, Ganden, and Drepung abbots and the Kashag informed the Panchen that the impasse could be overcome if he agreed to send a letter (with his seal on it) guaranteeing that his escort

99. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 13 September 1937. Ya (1986: 858–59) cites a letter the Chinese Special Escort sent to the Panchen Lama as soon as he heard from the Chinese government that the return to Tibet was to be postponed if there was a possibility of conflict. It said, "On the 23rd of last month, an order from the Administrative Yuan [of the Chinese government] arrived by telegram for me, the Special Escort. In this it said that you should temporarily postpone your return to Tibet. . . . Rimpoche, you should once again send a telegram to the representatives of the Big Three Monasteries asking them to inform the Kashag clearly of the following three conditions: 1. The Kashag is not permitted to obstruct or block the Chinese Government's Special Escort and Retinue and Escort Guard when they return to Tibet with the Panchen Lama; 2. Outstanding issues between Ü and Tsang [Lhasa and Tashilhunpo] can be settled after the Panchen Lama returns to Tibet; 3. When the Panchen Lama and the escort arrive at the Tibetan border, the Kashag should immediately provide transportation services for the journey into Tibet. If the Kashag approves of these points and telegraphs us within ten days, I, the Special Escort, will petition the [Chinese] government to permit us to leave for Tibet, and this will be approved. If after ten days no reply is received, or if the Tibetan government replies negatively that it is unable to accept these points, it will be a sign that the Kashag does not respect the Panchen Lama, and you, in accordance with the advice of the Chinese government, will not leave for Tibet for awhile."

100. Thub bstan sangs rgyas (Thubten Sanggye) 1982: 64. The Tibetan is: *rang dbang phran bu dgos kyi red.*

101. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 17 September 1937.

would leave after a few months. It is apparent that this change of heart on the part of the Kashag was an artifact of the altered balance of power resulting from the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war.[102]

However, it was too late. Tsiang's information had been correct: the Panchen Lama responded to this major concession on the part of the Tibetan government by saying that he was returning to Kanze (in Chinese-held Kham) and was not coming to Tibet that year. Norbhu Döndup reported that the Panchen said: "I have received your message which I do not understand as you have included various obstructive conditions in it. Moreover I have no orders from the Chinese Government to proceed to Tibet. I am therefore returning to Chinese territory."[103]

On receipt of this reply the National Assembly was again convened and a heated discussion ensued between the monastic segment, who wanted another invitation sent, and the lay officials, who objected strenuously. Norbhu Döndup's paraphrased report of the arguments in the assembly reveals the internal debate:

> The opposing party [against issuing another invitation] argued that the Tibetan Government sent repeated wireless messages direct to the Chinese Government and also via the Tibetan representatives in China asking them not to send a Chinese escort, and secondly, that a written protest was sent by the Tibetan Government. This party considered it necessary to maintain the same policy with regard to the escort. This party also argued that since the Tashi Lama informed the Tibetan Government repeatedly of his desire to return to Tibet and managed to get Sendregasum to bear witness and stand sureties for him, the Tibetan Government agreed to this arrangement and wired permission to him accordingly. Now the Tashi Lama refuses to come to Tibet obeying the orders of the Chinese Government, disregarding the Tibetan Government and their kind invitation because of Chinese support.
>
> To which the first party replied, "The Tashi Lama is anxious to return to Tibet as he asked Sendregasum to stand guarantors." They added that

102. Ya 1986: 860–61.

103. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, telegram from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 12 October 1937. Ya (1986: 860–61) cites a letter dated 1 October 1937 from the Panchen Lama to the Chinese Special Escort in which the former said that since the Tibetan government had not been sincere in their welcome, he would listen to the advice of the Chinese government and would not return to Tibet for awhile.

> "he being the leader of the Buddhist religion they were of the opinion that he will not do anything which might damage the sanctity of religion and will return to Tibet peacefully as China is at present engaged in war with Japan." They therefore suggested that the Tashi Lama should be invited again to return to Tibet with his escort. They added that if he comes, the Tibetan Government can see that the escort is returned to China and in case the escort refuses to go, the Tibetan Government can force them to leave the country.
>
> The opposing party then replied that the Tashi Lama is definitely in favor of China and seeing Tibet's weakness he wants to be the King of Tibetans who would be under Chinese suzerainty. It is therefore not advisable to invite him again and they suggested the matter should be left as it stands.[104]

Having reached no consensus after four days of discussion, the assembly approached the Kashag, who, after deliberation (and, undoubtedly, discussion with the regent), sent the following wireless messag on 10 October to their representatives in the Panchen's camp: "Wir cause of Tashi Lama's proposed return to Chinese territory. Is it unde orders of Chinese Government? If he does not agree to our condition wire which one in particular he disagrees to."[105] There is no record of reply, but the Panchen returned to Jyekundo soon after this. He fell il there and died on 1 December 1937, thus ending the threat to Tibet.

In retrospect, it is clear that the Chinese had missed a golden oppor tunity to establish a strong pro-Chinese party in Tibet. China had bee forced to back down by internal and external discord. In particular, th eruption of the Sino-Japanese war in July 1937 not only absorbed all o China's energies but reemphasized the importance of maintainin friendly relations with Britain. China was too weak to risk what migh have become a costly war with Tibet.

Tibet had thus once again defied the Chinese and come away unscathed. This success further reinforced the belief among the more conservative and religious elements that there was no need to "modernize" Tibet's religious polity in order to maintain a de facto independence

104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.

For the rest of Reting's regency, Tibet would face the future embedded in the past.

The Panchen Lama incident had another important consequence: the establishment of a permanent British Mission in Lhasa. When Gould came to Lhasa in 1936, he brought a wireless unit with him to offset the one the Chinese had brought in 1934. When he left in February 1937, Gyantse trade agent Richardson and some other officials remained in Lhasa. As with the Chinese Mission, the Tibetan government officially treated the office as temporary but made no attempt to close it down. The British Mission in Lhasa remained in operation throughout the period covered by this history.

THE ANGLO-TIBETAN DISPUTE OVER TAWANG

In 1935, while the dispute with the Panchen was playing out its course, the Tibetan interregnum government was unexpectedly confronted with another internal problem when control over the remote area known as Tawang became a serious matter of contention between British India and Tibet.

The Tawang tract is south of the main Himalayan crest in what the British called the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA), and India today calls Arunachal Pradesh (see Maps 7 and 8). The administrative center of the area was the town and monastery of Tawang, the latter a branch of Loseling college containing about 500 monks. Because of Tawang's relatively low altitude (8,500 feet), it was used as a winter residence by the two Tibetan district commissioners of Tsöna Dzong.

Comprising about 2,000 square miles, the Tawang tract was divided into two segments. One, north of the Se La pass and centered around Tawang itself, was under the control of the Tsöna Dzong district commissioners. The other, south of the Se La pass, belonged predominantly to Tawang monastery (and Loseling), which appointed officials to administer the villages and collect taxes.[106]

The earliest mention of Tawang in Western sources is found in Pem-

106. Lamb 1964: 119–20.

berton's report of 1839: he refers to a "Towang Raja, a Chieftain immediately dependent on Lassa [Lhasa]" and to Tawang as "a tract of country dependent on Lassa and forming an integral portion of Tibet territory."[107]

In 1864, Ashley Eden described the Tawang Raja as "a priest subordinate to Lassa . whose special duty is to protect the people of South-East Tibet from the raids of the Tongso Penlow [of Bhutan]."[108] Unquestionably, then, prior to 1914 Tawang was under Tibetan control.[109]

The Anglo-Tibetan dispute over the control of Tawang and NEFA derived from the Simla Talks of 1913–1914. During this period, A. H. McMahon, the British plenipotentiary, persuaded the Tibetan plenipotentiary, Shatra, to agree to a new frontier line along the crest of the Himalayas (rather than the then current boundary along the plains). Shatra exchanged letters with McMahon in March 1914, accepting this new frontier, which has come to be known as the McMahon Line.[110] Shatra apparently agreed to relinquish Tawang and NEFA to India in order to placate McMahon, with the expectation that Britain would compel China to accept the Simla Convention and thus achieve Tibet's aim.

Tibet's agreement to the new border brought no change to the administration of Tawang; the Tibetan government and Drepung monastery continued to administer it, as before. This did not surprise the Tibetans; they appear to have assumed that they would maintain administrative control of the areas while negotiations to persuade China to accept the overall Simla Convention continued.

The outbreak of World War I, and the difficulty of penetrating these wilderness areas from the Indian plains, led British India to ignore

107. Pemberton 1961: 15, 78.

108. *Political Missions to Bhootan* 1865: 131–32.

109. FO371/20963, B. Gould's Report on Tawang, attached to an express letter from B. Gould (in Lhasa) to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 15 November 1936.

110. The agreement also specified that the Tibetans would have free access to important pilgrimage spots south of the new border. Note should also be taken that China repudiated the Simla Convention, including the McMahon Line, and the Chinese have never ceased to claim this area. All recent maps from the People's Republic of China, for example, include it as part of China.

its territorial windfall. The British never established an administrative presence in these areas, nor did they perform topographical surveys or publish the text of the Simla agreement. They did not even authorize the Survey of India to prepare maps indicating the new border.

Consequently, the 1914 agreement gradually came to be forgotten even within the Government of India bureaucracy. In 1935, neither of the two British Indian officers most directly concerned, the political officer in Sikkim (in charge of Indo-Tibetan relations) and the governor of Assam, knew that such a border existed. Two events in 1934–1935, however, revived British cognizance of the area and the 1914 agreement concerning it.

One of these events concerned a dispute between Bhutan and Assam over whether some tribal peoples living south of the Se La pass were under the administration of Tibet, Bhutan, or Assam. The other concerned the misadventures of a British explorer-botanist, F. Kingdon Ward, who had wanted to undertake research in the area north of the Se La pass but had been refused permission by the Tibetan government to enter Tibet. He went on with his work anyway and was arrested in 1935 by Tibetan officials, who then protested this violation of their border to the British mission visiting Lhasa (the Williamson mission). Kingdon Ward claimed that one of the Tibetan district commissioners at Tawang (from Tsöna Dzong) had given him verbal permission to enter Tibet. He was released but the incident sparked the Foreign and Political Office of the Government of India to investigate whether Kingdon Ward had actually crossed the border. The investigation led to the rediscovery that as a result of the Simla Convention the border lay at the crest of the Himalayas, placing the entire Tawang tract within Indian territory. Consequently, in November 1935, the Government of India told both the political officer in Sikkim and the governor of Assam that the Indo-Tibetan boundary was the crest of the Himalayas as represented by the red line on the Simla Convention maps and that this had been accepted by the Tibetan government in accordance with Article IX of the 1914 Convention. The telegram asked why Tibetan officials were in Tawang and whether Kingdon Ward had passed into Tibetan territory, beyond the rediscovered border. It also specifically instructed the political officer in Sikkim that he should "not in any way

compromise with the Tibetan Government [the] validity of [the] international boundary agreed to in 1914."[111]

When the telegram reached Lhasa, after Williamson had died, the acting head of the mission, Captain Battye, raised the issue. He reported: "Tibetan Government allege that Kingdon Ward went far beyond the red Line [the new border marked on the Simla maps] even to Kongbo, Pome and Poyul north of the Tsangpo. They maintain that the Red Line has not been modified. . . . Kingdon Ward has been sent back to India and Tibetan Government are willing to regard the incident as closed."[112]

Battye's diplomatic representation concerning the "Red Line" (the McMahon Line) shocked the interregnum leadership, for Tibetan political ideology made it virtually impossible for the Tibetan government to agree to the alienation of any part of Tibetan territory; the regents were duty bound to maintain the territorial integrity of the late Dalai Lama's patrimony until his next reincarnation took power. Moreover, not only was Tawang the location of a large monastery that was associated with the largest and most powerful monastery in Lhasa, but the inaction of the British in this area over the past twenty-one years was testimony to Tibet's rights to Tawang, at least until the Simla agreement was accepted by all the parties concerned.

Nevertheless, Tibet realized that it could not afford to reject the McMahon Line unilaterally, for that would imply rejection of the entire Simla Convention and might prompt the British to leave Tibet to stand alone against the Chinese at this precarious point in their history. Tibet's answer to the dilemma lay in a traditional Tibetan political ploy—saying formally what an adversary wanted to hear, while continuing to pursue their own interests. It is not surprising, then, that Battye was left with the impression that the "Tibetan Government have indicated their adherence to the red line in connection with the Kingdon Ward case."[113] It is also not surprising to note that the Tibetan government did not tell Battye they would withdraw their administration from Ta-

111. Gupta 1974: 69.
112. IOR, L/PS/12/4200, telegram from the Lhasa trade agent to the Government of India, dated 14 November 1935.
113. IOR, L/PS/12/4200, telegram from the secretary of state, Government of India to the Foreign and Political Department in New Delhi, dated 15 September 1936.

wang; they merely agreed in general that such a border line had been negotiated in 1914 and that they had ratified it. The Kashag hoped this would end the direct confrontation, while leaving Tibet in control of the area.

But this time, having rediscovered the very advantageous McMahon border, the British asserted their control over it. The Government of India published the Simla Convention in Aitchison's Treaties (without the maps) and had the Survey of India produce a map that showed the McMahon boundary line. At the same time the McMahon Line was brought to the attention of the leading map publishers in Britain.[114] Moreover, in September 1936, the Assam government argued that action should be taken to assume control of these areas:

> It is highly desirable to emphasize the interest of British India in the Tawang area either by actual tours or by collecting the revenue [taxes] ourselves, since the mere reproduction of the McMahon Line on Survey of India maps would be insufficient to correct false impressions which have gained ground in the years since 1914. The continued exercise of jurisdiction by Tibet in Tawang and the area north of Tawang might enable China, or any other power which may in the future be in a position to assert authority over Tibet, to claim prescriptive rights over a part of the territory recognised as within India by the 1914 Convention.[115]

These fears were not entirely without substance. In the period from 1909 to 1911, when China administered Tibet, substantial Chinese penetration into these areas had occurred. The Chinese had posted a detachment of troops near Rima and had placed boundary markers as far as Walong; in 1911, they had sent officials to secure the submission of tribal Mishmi headmen in the southern parts of NEFA.[116] The fall of the Ch'ing dynasty ended this threat but left the conviction that if the Chinese ever again gained control of Tibet, they would make an effort to control these areas, and Bhutan as well.

Before any such action was begun, Gould was instructed to pursue

114. FO371/35754 (61746), report titled "History of Situation in India's N.E. Frontier with Tibet."
115. Reid 1942: 294–95. Sir Robert Reid was governor of Assam at that time.
116. Lamb 1964: 135–37.

the Tawang (and the central sector or Tehri) border issues with Tibet during his 1936 mission to Lhasa. He describes how he raised the issue of Tawang with the Tibetan Kashag:

> I said that the Kashag were doubtless fully aware of the terms of the convention of 3rd July 1914 which, under the Declaration of the same date, had been acknowledged to be binding on the Government of Great Britain and Tibet. Under this convention Tibet had no claim to any territory to the south of the red line which had been drawn to the north of Tawang. The Kashag, who had no warning that the subject of Tawang was likely to be raised, replied promptly that they were fully aware of the terms of the 1914 Convention: but that (1) up to 1914 Tawang had undoubtedly been Tibetan, (2) they regarded the adjustment of the Tibet-Indian boundary as part and parcel of the general adjustment and determination of boundaries contemplated in the 1914 Convention. Since China refused to ratify the Convention which provided for an adjustment of the Sino-Tibetan boundary favourable to Tibet, Tibet would not be expected to grant a concession in respect of the Indo-Tibetan boundary and get nothing in return, (3) If they could, with our help, secure a definite Sino-Tibetan boundary as defined in 1914.[?] They had been encouraged in thinking that His Majesty's Government and the Government of India sympathised with this way of regarding the matter owing to the fact that at no time since the Convention and Declaration of 1914 had the Indian Government taken steps to question Tibetan, or to assert British authority in the Tawang area. They also repeated a vague rigamarole, on the lines reported in Bailey's D.O letter No. 530-p of the 8th September 1924 (which mentions Tawang also) to the effect that the Anglo-Tibetan Trade Regulations are subject to renewal from time to time and that the position in regard to the Tawang area is affected by the fact that no such renewal of the Trade Regulations had taken place.[117]

This was a cogent argument. Although the Simla documents did not support Tibet's contention that the Anglo-Tibetan border was contingent on China's acceptance of the Simla Convention, Tibet's challenge to the British claim to NEFA on the basis of deeds put pressure on the

117. FO371/20963, express letter no. 6(1)-P/36 from B. Gould in Lhasa to the Foreign and Political Department, Government of India, dated 15 November 1936. Point 2 from L/PS/12/4200, minute of Kitarus, Foreign and Political Department, Government of India, dated 23 June 1938.

British to explain why, if this area did indeed belong to them, they had not done anything about it for twenty-one years.

Gould did not accept the argument, however. He told the Kashag that "there was no possible doubt that the Indo-Tibetan boundary had definitely been determined by the Convention and Declaration of 1914; it was in accordance with this Convention and Declaration that relations between His Majesty's Government and the Tibetan Government had been conducted ever since 1914."[118] On the other hand, Gould did realize the strength of the Tibetans' feelings and argued with Delhi that because of other urgent matters such as the threat of a Sino-Tibetan war developing out of the Panchen Lama's situation, "further discussion of the . . . Tawang question might be deferred."[119]

Although Gould agreed to defer the Tawang question, he recognized the strategic importance of this area to the Government of India and reminded Delhi that the Tawang tract, lying as it does south of the crest of the Himalayas in a relatively mild climate and low altitude, was militarily a critical area. He said: "It is difficult to imagine any method by which the Chinese, by moderate amount of expenditure and effort, could cause us more embarrassment than by claiming that Tawang is Chinese and by locating Chinese troops, and a Chinese administration, in the Tawang area."[120] He set out three possible scenarios for the Foreign and Political Department: (1) if Tibet succeeded in reaching an agreement with China over the border, her arguments of quid pro quo would have been met and she would have to accept the validity of the McMahon Line; (2) if Tibet allowed Chinese troops to enter Tibet with the Panchen Lama, Britain should "take the bull by the horns" and at once exercise its authority in Tawang, to prevent the Chinese from entering or influencing this area; or (3) if the present situation continued, then in consultation with the Assam government a new administration might be introduced gradually in NEFA, so as not to shock Tibetan sensibilities.[121]

The Government in Delhi, however, uninterested in Tibetan sensi-

118. FO371/20963, express letter no. 6(1)-P/36 from B. Gould in Lhasa to Foreign and Political Department, Government of India, dated 15 November 1936.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid.

bilities, called the Kashag's attitude "wholly untenable." They instructed Gould to secure Tibetan agreement for the Government of India to administer the area and asked him to obtain written reaffirmation of the validity of the McMahon Line.[122] Precipitating these actions was the Assam government's mid-October request to Delhi for permission to send tours to Tawang and to adjoining areas. The Government of India agreed to put these in the budget for the upcoming year and indicated that it was desirable for the Assam government to collect revenues in this area so that all Tibetan officials might be withdrawn.[123]

Gould realized the enormous difficulty of persuading the Tibetan government to put anything in writing. He responded vigorously:

> I hope in time to succeed in securing acquiescence of Tibetan Government in whatever measures Government of India may wish to undertake in Tawang area and even written affirmation of Mac Mahon Line if in the light of development of events such reaffirmation still appears to be necessary. Main problem at present is how best to secure what is essential in Tawang area without prejudice to our interests in other matters. .
>
> I apprehend that if at present stage I were to suggest written reaffirmation my action would tend to create impression that we ourselves feel that engagements of 1914 stand in need of reaffirmation; and it is practically certain that Tibetan Government would decline to reaffirm especially in writing except after reference to Regent, Prime Minister, National Assembly and Monastery who were signatories to declaration of 3rd July, 1914. China would in one way or another be likely to make capital out of such requirements and opportunity would be to Tibetan Government to attempt to attach negotiations for affirmation all sorts of requests *vis-a-vis* China.
>
> In my opinion at present stage best method of dealing with anomalous *de facto* position in Tawang will be by definite action on our part backed by reiteration of oral explanation here of our indubitable rights rather than by raising question of reaffirmation.[124]

122. FO371/20963, telegram from the Foreign and Political Department in New Delhi to Gould in Lhasa, dated 8 December 1936.

123. FO371/20963, letter from the Foreign and Political Department, Government of India, to the chief secretary to the Government of Assam, dated 9 December 1936.

124. FO371/20963, telegram from B. Gould in Lhasa to the Foreign and Political Department in New Delhi, dated 12 December 1936.

Gould's arguments swayed the Government of India, which instructed him to discuss "assertive measures" with the Assam government before that government took action.[125]

In April 1938, the British finally initiated action: Captain G. S. Lightfoot led a modest force to Tawang. He reported that the Tawang area north of the Se La pass was controlled by Tibet and that Tibetan officials collected taxes south of this into the areas of Dirang Dzong and Kalaktang, whose inhabitants were Tibetan Buddhists of either Bhutanese or Mönpa stock. Lightfoot was instructed to collect a tax to demonstrate that this was Indian territory, but he was also instructed not to demand the withdrawal of the Tibetan officials and not to make assurances to the local people that they no longer had to pay taxes to Tibet.[126] Although the expedition was modest, when news of it reached Lhasa from the Tibetan district commissioner in Tsöna Dzong and the abbot of Tawang monastery, the Tibetans lodged a strong protest with Norbhu Döndup, the resident Government of India official in Lhasa. After nine meetings with the Kashag and three with the regent, he reported that the Tibetans were reluctant to admit the validity of the Red Line. Norbhu Döndup concluded that there would be no quick settlement: "All of them are afraid to come to a decision in the matter and the explanation given by them [that they have to find their copy of the Simla Convention] . . is merely a pretence."[127]

However, this first British presence in Tawang had little effect on the de facto situation. Lighthouse left no garrison or civil officers, and after his withdrawal the Tawang matter again receded into the background. In Tibet, the discovery and enthronement of the new Dalai Lama absorbed the interests of the civil and religious elites; and for the British, a combination of factors such as the tense European situation on the eve of World War II, a reluctance to allocate the large sums of money that would be needed to take genuine possession of Tawang and the

125. FO371/20963, telegram from the Foreign and Political Department in New Delhi to B. Gould in Lhasa, dated 17 December 1936.

126. IOR, L/PS/12/4200 (PZ 3507/38), telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Foreign and Political Department in New Delhi dated 4 May 1938.; Reid 1942: 294–95.

127. IOR, L/PS/12/4200, letter from Norbhu Döndup to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 26 August 1938.

other areas in NEFA, the ill-feeling such a move would obviously create between the British and Tibetans, and the fact that the Japanese invasion of China and the death of the Panchen Lama had eliminated the danger of a Sino-Tibetan war (and the likelihood that China might soon take over Tibet) led the Government of India to leave the matter in abeyance for a year or so, although Lightfoot and Reid, the governor of Assam, urged further missions in early 1939.

During this brief interim, a more flexible position on the McMahon Line began to emerge in India. Compromise solutions were discussed wherein *adjustments* in the frontier would be made that would leave Tibetans in control of Tawang, the area of most importance to them.

One crucial factor motivating this shift was the cogent analysis of the McMahon Line and current Indian policy presented by Sir H. Twynum, the acting governor of Assam in 1939, in a letter to Lord Linlithgow, the governor-general. The main points of his argument were, first, that the map attached to the Simla agreement was small scale and therefore unclear with regard to Tawang: the McMahon Line was superimposed on the word *Tawang*. He asked:

> The actual boundary as now claimed is based upon notes which were exchanged on 24th and 25th March 1914 between Sir Henry McMahon and Lonchen Shatra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary, which were accompanied by two maps which undoubtedly place Tawang on the British side of the "red line". The Tibetan Plenipotentiary's note dated 25th March 1914 states that he had received orders from Lhasa and accordingly agreed to the boundary. Do we base our claims on these notes, which are lacking in formalities associated with a treaty, or on Article 9 of the Convention which does not refer to the maps accompanying the interchanged notes, but only to the small scale map attached to the Convention which was subsequently not ratified by China?[128]

Second, he asked how the fact that India and Britain took no steps to implement Article IX of the Convention from 1914 to 1938 affected the British position from the point of international law and in terms of equity. Third, given that India's overriding policy was to maintain good relations with Tibet, he suggested that a more reasonable policy might

128. IOR, L/PS/12/4188, dated 17 March 1939.

be to reduce the Indian claim and cede the Tawang area, fixing the boundary further south than the Himalayan crests to take in only the Dirang Dzong and Kalaktang areas, or possibly just the latter. Such a policy could elicit a formal reaffirmation by Tibet of the rest of the McMahon Line.[129]

London asked the viceroy in New Delhi for his views on Twynum's letter, and he replied: "My view is that there is much to be said for his proposal both on general and financial grounds, particularly as he thinks that a boundary south of the Se La Pass would cost only about one-fourth of the expenditure estimated to be necessary, if we were to decide eventually to go right up to the McMahon Line and include Tawang."[130] Similarly, at a meeting in Assam on 1 August 1940, the concerned officials, including the governor of Assam and the political officer for Sikkim, concluded that Delhi should accept a border that was further south than the McMahon Line, either running through the Se La range, or even further south, in the area of Dirang Dzong. They also recommended that it would be better to "vindicate" the McMahon Line in the more easterly parts of NEFA such as the Siang and Lohit areas, where Tibetans had less direct concerns. They therefore suggested leaving the Tawang, Dirang Dzong, and Kalaktang areas as they were for the time being.[131]

As a result, for the next three years nothing was done in Tawang, although armed posts were established in 1940 and 1941 in Karko and Riga in the Siang River area east of Tawang.[132] Even this modest activity ceased after the outbreak of World War II. The Tibetan strategy of intransigence appeared to have succeeded for the time, but the Tawang issue was to flare up again in 1943, as will be examined in Chapter 12.

129. Ibid.
130. IOR, L/PS/12/4200, letter from the secretary of state for India, London, to the viceroy, dated 25 July 1939; IOR, L/PS/12/4200, letter from the viceroy to the secretary of state for India, dated 24 August 1939.
131. IOR, L/PS/12/4188 (PZ 555/1940).
132. Reid 1942: 257–62.

9

RETING TAKES CONTROL, THEN RESIGNS

After the 13th Dalai Lama died, the Kashag, led by Trimön, reasserted its traditional authority and dominated the weak and pliable Lönchen Langdün. The appointment as regent of the youthful and inexperienced Reting did not alter their stance. Reting, however, was no Langdün. He disliked taking advice from others or having to negotiate decisions, and he felt he should rule Tibet just as previous regents had. He chafed at the two impediments in his path: the arrogant Trimön Shape, and the Lönchen Langdün with whom his power was divided to such an extent that no new seal had been created for his regency. Reting was to become a feared ruler, but in the first years of his reign this future was hidden from view.

RETING'S VISIT TO LAKE LHAMOLATSO

The main task of the interregnum government was to find the new Dalai Lama. Reting, as a great incarnate lama, felt that this duty devolved upon himself in particular. The process of selecting a new Dalai Lama was critical to the legitimacy of the Tibetan polity. Its authority depended on a total transfer of charisma from the old to the new Dalai Lama, who was considered his incarnation. The selection process therefore had to be accepted as infallible. Tibetans achieved this conviction by deflecting the main responsibility for selection onto the realm of the supernatural. Tibetans have well-developed methods of testing and selecting candidates for the position of Dalai Lama, but the difficult task

of identifying such candidates is generally guided by prophecies, signs, and portents that focus attention on specific parts of the country and then, within these, on specific kinds of buildings, scenery, and so forth.

The search for the 14th Dalai Lama began in the summer of 1935, after the consecration of the late Dalai Lama's tomb. Reting, accompanied by high officials such as Trimön Shape and his own large retinue, set off on a long pilgrimage that included a traditional visit to the holy lake of Lhamolatso in southern Tibet, in which prophetic images can sometimes be seen. Shakabpa was in the government retinue accompanying the regent:

> They say you should not look at these lakes [smaller ones along the way to the main lake] because if you see visions there you do not get to see visions at the main lake. Therefore we averted our glance so as not to see the lakes by chance as we rode by. . . . We found an open space on top of the mountain [overlooking the main lake], made a temporary camp there, and offered prayers to a local deity. The prayers were chanted with full ritual music by the monks from Namkye Tratsang [the Dalai Lama's monastery in the Potala] who had accompanied the group. When you look down from the peak you can see the lake which appears turquoise blue. From this site we had to walk down individually without making any noise. They say that if you go down with your friends you will not see any visions. So we all went separately without servants or companions. The Regent and Trimön rode down the steep slope to the lake on yaks while we had to walk. . . . The Regent went back to the lake three times. The first was very ceremonial and involved the entire retinue. The second and third visits were private and he was accompanied by only a few attendants. Trimön similarly visited the lake two more times. We used to sit between the rocks waiting 2–3 hours to try to get a vision. I saw nothing on all of my three visits. Reting Rimpoche, however, had a vision. . . Before we were to depart from Chökhorgyal people started talking about the visions of the Regent but he would not make any comment. He only announced his vision in the following year at a meeting of the Assembly called for that purpose.[1]

On the way back to Lhasa, the regent stopped for five days in Rame, his place of birth. There strange happenings began that significantly altered the power structure in Tibet.

1. Shakabpa, interview. The regent's vision was to play a major role in the selection of the Dalai Lama and will be discussed below.

The tents of the regent's party were normally pitched some distance from those of the government officials; only his personal entourage was allowed to stay close to the regent. On this occasion, however, Trimön went to Reting's tent several days in a row in the late afternoon and did not return until late in the evening. At that time, Trimön said nothing to anyone about these highly unusual long evening visits.

After Rame, the group went to Taklo monastery. There, Trimön called his nephew Shakabpa to his quarters and, after reviewing the whole history of his service to the government, told Shakabpa to draft a petition to be submitted to the regent requesting permission for Trimön to resign from the Kashag. Trimön repeatedly stated that all his various activities and accomplishments should be listed in detail in this petition, and he told Shakabpa to end the petition by saying that he was now advanced in age and would like to resign to devote the remaining part of his life to religious pursuits. Shakabpa was shocked. Trimön was at the height of his power and was only about fifty-seven years old. He asked his uncle why he was making such a sudden decision without consulting his family and the other shapes. Trimön responded that both he and the regent were going to resign, and he insisted that Shakabpa draft this letter immediately.[2]

Trimön was known to be very conservative, stern, and arrogant, believing himself indispensable to the operation of government. He apparently felt that he should have the rank of lönchen since he was really doing the lönchen's work. But he was also a deeply religious person who believed that he was an incarnate lama. He seems to have suffered at various times from mental instability. Several incidents suggest that during this period Trimön had a particularly intense religious experience that may have triggered a partial breakdown. When he was visiting the ancient monastery of Samye, he climbed up onto the Blue Stupa and called to his nephew Shakabpa, "Look, son—he always used to call me son—you see the lead band around this stupa. I did all these things."[3] Shakabpa explained that in the Kathang text it is stated that the Blue Stupa at Samye was built in the eighth century by Chölön Dorje Tricung, and Trimön believed he was the incarnation of that

2. Ibid.; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 338.
3. Shakabpa, interview.

lama. Shakabpa also recalled that Trimön was once asked by Kharak Yondzin Rimpoche to accompany him on a ritual prayer march (*chökhor*). Shakabpa saw them both returning from this march wearing the distinctive dress and hat of the Red Hat Nyingmapa Tertön lamas,[4] an unthinkable garb for a shape.

Given Trimön's state of mind, one may surmise that Reting and his advisors may have seen an opportunity to eliminate the arrogant, bossy, and now unstable Trimön. Reting's declaration to Trimön that he would resign with him suggests that Reting told Trimön (or insinuated to him) that he deserved to be made lönchen and that if he resigned as shape, Reting could not continue without him and would also resign, thereby forcing the assembly to persuade Reting and Trimön to stay by offering to promote Trimön to the position of lönchen.

After returning to Lhasa in late October 1935, Trimön revised his resignation letter and, despite the advice of his family, presented it to the regent just before the Tibetan New Year (roughly January 1936).

Reting, of course, did not resign nor did he respond at all to Trimön's letter of resignation. This appears to have provoked a worsening of Trimön's mental state and his behavior became extremely bizarre. For example, he went into the market in Lhasa dressed in a white *shamthab* (the lower dress worn by ascetic lamas); he was seen playing music and dancing in the market; and he once caused an incident by banging on the door of the Jokhang Temple, yelling for the stewards to open it. Trimön was either clearly unbalanced or, as his nephew Shakabpa tactfully suggests, perhaps was just acting crazy so that his petition to resign would be accepted.

Trimön's eccentricities did not pass unnoticed in Lhasa, as the following Lhasa street song shows:

> Oh great Sawangchemmo,
> who when high didn't hold on to the heights,
> [You] put on a white *shamthab* and
> did a mad dance; How come?[5]

4. Shakabpa, interview. A *tertön* is a lama who discovers a text hidden centuries earlier.

5. In Tibetan: *mtho dus mtho tshod ma zin / mi rje sa dbang chen mo / sham thabs dkar po bzhes nas / snyo 'cham brgyab nas gang yong*.

Soon after the New Year's celebrations, Reting accepted Trimön's resignation and rewarded him for his service to the country by granting him an estate called Kaship Nubling. Trimön turned out to be very distressed by this and unsuccessfully tried to muster support for his reinstatement. One former official recalls an incident recounted by his father (who was then a tsipön) that shows Trimön did not really want to resign.

> Once when my father and Ramba were in a meeting as trungtsi [after Trimön had resigned], Trimön came and took out a telegram telling them that Chiang Kai-shek had sent him this cable requesting him not to resign. He showed them the telegram. My father and Ramba were thus put in a very awkward position, for if they said, "Oh, yes, you shouldn't resign," then they were afraid that Trimön would start making more statements that the trungtsi don't want him to resign. So neither of them could really say anything at all other than [the meaningless] "Ah, Ah."[6]

The elimination of Trimön marks a major transition in the interregnum period. For the next five years, Reting would increasingly come to dominate the weak Langdün and control the government.

THE SEARCH FOR THE NEW DALAI LAMA

In the summer of 1936, two and a half years after the 13th Dalai Lama had died, Reting convened the Tibetan National Assembly to approve sending teams to search for the new Dalai Lama.

Reting explained to the assembly the various supernatural signs and omens that he believed were clues to the whereabouts of the Dalai Lama's incarnation, the most important of which was his vision the pre-

6. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. Another common story holds that Trimön continued to attend the Kashag after his resignation until finally his cushion was removed and he was told to cease attending (Anon1, interview; Sambo [Rimshi], interview). Shakabpa denies that this ever happened. Later, during the early years of Taktra's regency, Trimön attempted to regain a shape seat by offering the regent's manager the estate the government had given him when he resigned. But he again had no luck. In the end, heavily in debt, he gave all his estates to Kundeling Labrang, who assumed his debts and paid his expenses until both Trimön and his second wife died (Kundeling Dzasa, interview).

vious year in the waters of Lake Lhamolatso. Reting told the delegates he had seen three letters of the Tibetan alphabet (*a, ka, ma*), a monastery with a three-tiered turquoise roof and a gilded pagoda-like top, and a twisting trail leading east of this monastery to a bare hill opposite a small one-story house with a blue roof.[7] Unsure of the meaning of these images, Reting had kept silent about this for an entire year, consulting secretly with a few lamas and oracles. Now he announced that the letter *a* that he had seen stood for Amdo, a part of China's Tsinghai Province with many ethnic Tibetans.

This interpretation was consistent with other supernatural evidence. For example, after the Dalai Lama died his body was placed in state on a throne in Norbulinga facing south.[8] Twice, however, when attendants returned the next morning, they found that the Dalai Lama's head had turned to the east. Similarly, on the east side of a wooden pillar located on the northeast side of that room, a great star-shaped fungus suddenly appeared; and on several different occasions, the state oracles Nechung, Gadong, and Samye had flung ceremonial scarves toward the east while in trance.

Reting's selection of Amdo and the east, however, met with some resistance. Lönchen Langdün and several other lay officials felt that there was a strong candidate present in Lhasa: a relative of Langdün's, Yabshi Phawpön's son, who was born amid a number of auspicious signs. For example, on one occasion a horse from the late Dalai Lama's stable broke loose and ran directly to Phawpön's house, that is, to his old master.[9] Moreover, these officials did not like the idea of focusing the search for the new Dalai Lama in Chinese-controlled territory, since this could give the Chinese a lever to increase their influence in Tibet.[10]

The National Assembly, however, followed Reting's assessment and launched three search teams, each headed by an incarnate lama and each including both monk and lay government officials. These three search parties were given the regent's written notes on the relevant omens and

7. Kun rtse (Kusantse/Kheme) 1968: 21–22; Dalai Lama 1977: 21–22.

8. Actually, the body of the deceased Dalai Lama was being embalmed. Since this is a very slow process, the body, wrapped in gauze, was placed on a throne and the populace was allowed an audience with it.

9. Anon1, interview.

10. Rwa sgreng mkhan po 1985: 79.

so forth, and in the autumn of 1936, were sent, respectively, to the northeast (Amdo), the east (Kham), and the southeast (Takpo and Kongpo). The southeast search team was headed by Phurbucho Rimpoche and Tsendrön Temba Chungnay; the Amdo group was headed by Sera Che's Ketsang Rimpoche, lay official Kheme Sonam Wangdu, and monk officials Khenrab Tenzin and Lobsang Tshewang; and the Kham group was headed by Sera Che's Khangser Rimpoche, the monk official Tsultrim Chömpel, and the lay official Driyü.[11] The plan was for these groups to identify a number of exceptional candidates and then bring the favored two or three back to Lhasa for final scrutiny and selection.

When Ketsang Rimpoche's group reached Riwoche in Kham in late 1936, they were invited to visit the Panchen Lama in Jyekundo. In roughly February 1937, they reached Jyekundo and were informed by the Panchen Lama that he had discreetly investigated unusual births while he was living in Kumbum monastery and had found three interesting boys there. After a delay due to heavy snow, the search party left for Kumbum, arriving around May 1937 (on the tenth of the Tibetan third month). Kheme recalled that as soon as he saw the three-tiered, pagoda-style main building of Kumbum monastery with its roofs of gold and turquoise tiles, he thought that this must be the monastery Reting had seen in the holy lake.[12]

In July 1937, after the entire team went to Sining to pay a courtesy visit and present gifts to Ma Pu-fang, the semi-independent Moslem warlord in control of the area, the search continued for stories of remarkable births of male children. Although no truly extraordinary signs were found, after a month and a half the search team had put together a list of twelve names. To these were added two names from the Panchen Lama's list: a boy from Taktse, near Kumbum, and a boy who had pulled the Panchen's rosary while he was giving the Kalacakra teaching.[13]

11. Kun rtse (Kusantse/Kheme) 1968: 22–23; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 339. Kun rtse is an alternate family name for Kheme, who was the ranking lay official in the Amdo search team.

12. Kun rtse (Kusantse/Kheme) 1968: 28–33. Unless otherwise noted, the account of the Amdo search team derives from the firsthand source of Kun rtse, pp. 30–65. The roof is alternately described as jade or turquoise-like.

13. The third boy mentioned by the Panchen Lama had died.

The boys singled out by the Panchen Lama were the most important, and the team wanted to appraise them before visiting the others. However, they did not want to alert the parents as to the nature of their mission. Thus when they visited the boy from Taktse, who had been born in July 1935, they pretended to be travelers stopping overnight en route to a nearby holy site. Moreover, the head of the group, Ketsang Rimpoche, dressed as a servant so that he could stay in the kitchen and observe and talk with the boy informally, while the underlings acted as the lords and interacted with the parents. When the Taktse boy came into the kitchen, he looked carefully at the rosary Ketsang Rimpoche was wearing and said, "I want that." Ketsang Rimpoche replied, "If you know who I am I will definitely give you this rosary." The boy replied, "You are Aga of Sera." *Aga,* their translator explained, means *lama* in the local language; so the boy had said correctly that Ketsang Rimpoche was a lama from Sera monastery. The young boy spent most of the time with Ketsang Rimpoche and continually looked at and held the rosary, which had belonged to the 13th Dalai Lama. The next morning when they were about to leave the boy began to cry, saying he wanted to go with them.

Kheme and Khenrab Tenzin went alone to visit the house of the other boy mentioned by the Panchen Lama. They got there in the early morning. While having tea, they asked the family whether they had any young boys. The mother said she had only one son and then narrated the story of how he had pulled the rosary of the Panchen Lama. She brought the boy to meet them, but he was very shy and would not approach them. They thought he might act differently if he saw a rosary that had belonged to the 13th Dalai Lama, so Khenrab Tenzin put one around his neck and called the boy to him. The boy, however, still refused to come.

It is common for small children who are reincarnations of lamas to remember objects and people from their previous lives, and Tibetans believe that some can also recite the scriptures without having been taught. Thus, tradition dictated that each of the candidates be given a full set of tests consisting of matched pairs of articles, one of which was the personal property of the late Dalai Lama. The candidates were asked to choose one article from each pair; the reincarnation would presumably select the one he had owned as the late Dalai Lama. The search team therefore sent a secret telegram to Lhasa explaining what

they had already done and asking if they could start open testing. Th reply said: "The young Taktse boy sounds very interesting and we hav high hopes for him. So do a detailed and careful examination of tha boy." Consequently, after a few days, they all went quietly to the Takts boy's house. At the moment they were leaving Kumbum monaster the monks began blowing conch shells, a good omen in Tibet. Whe they were about to reach the boy's house, they met a Chinese ma carrying wood on three donkeys; he told them that if they traveled vi the lower road it would be better. When they did so, they came to a area where the 13th Dalai Lama himself had rested on his way to nearby retreat many years before. That day was also the first time tha year that they heard the sound of the cuckoo bird, also an auspiciou sign.

In the afternoon, they reached the Taktse house, the front of whic they found to be exactly like the house in Reting's vision.[14] After th search team had eaten, they asked permission to examine the boy. Th 14th Dalai Lama later wrote of this encounter.:

> So far, my mother and father had not suspected the real mission of the travelers they had entertained, but a few days later the whole search party of senior lamas and high dignitaries came to our house in Taktser. At the sight of this large distinguished party of visitors, my mother and father understood that I might be a reincarnation, for there are many incarnate lamas in Tibet, and my elder brother had already proved to be one of them. An incarnate lama had recently died at the monastery of Kumbum, and they thought the visitors might be searching for his reincarnation, but it did not occur to them that I might be the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama himself.[15]

The examination was done at a long table on which all the real an duplicate articles were laid out. Ketsang Rimpoche and Khenrab Ten zin stood at the right side of the table, while Kheme and Lobsang Tshe wang stood at the left. When the small boy came in, Ketsang picked u both rosaries in his hand and asked the boy which one he wanted. Th

14. The team considered that the Chinese man was sent by a deity to ensure tha they arrived at the front of the house so that they could see its similarity with the vision The upper route would have brought them to the rear of the house (ibid.: 45).

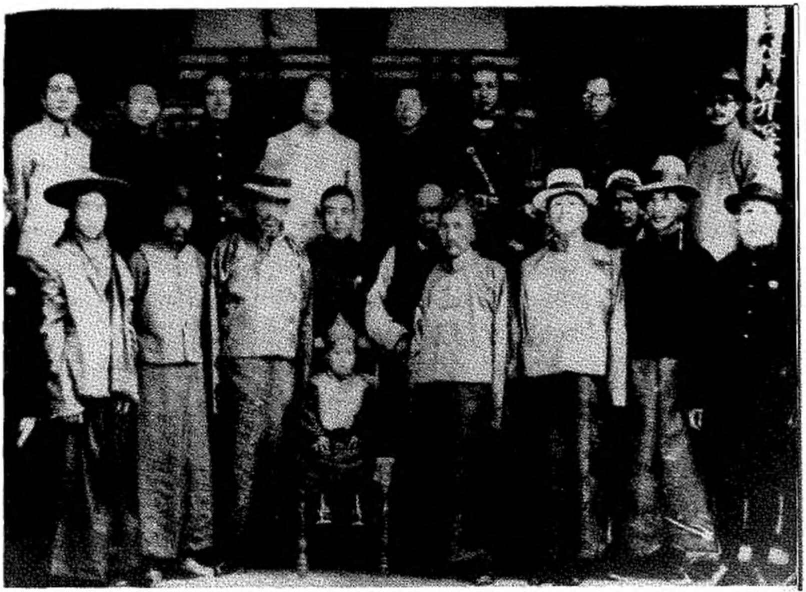
15. Dalai Lama 1962: 23.

boy took the Dalai Lama's and put it on his neck. He was then shown a second pair of yellow rosaries and the boy again chose the correct one. Next they offered him the late Dalai Lama's walking stick and Ketsang Rimpoche's. He looked carefully at these and started to take the fake one. The search team thought he was going to make a mistake, but the boy changed his mind, put the wrong one back, and took the correct one. Later, when they thought about this near-miss, they realized that the duplicate walking stick had in fact also once belonged to the Dalai Lama, who had given it to a lama, who had in turn given it to Ketsang Rimpoche. So the Taktse boy had made no mistake in the three tests. The last test involved the small *damaru* drum the 13th Dalai Lama had used to summon his servants. It was very plain, while the duplicate one was spectacularly beautiful, with ivory, gold, and turquoise and a long, multicolored brocade tassel. Kheme later said that he was very nervous about this test. However, the child again chose correctly, taking it immediately in his right hand and beginning to play it. At this point, Kheme wrote, he became convinced that they had found the real Dalai Lama, and his eyes filled with tears. The search team stayed that night and left the next morning. They wished that they could bring the boy with them, but they had to leave him since they did not want the Chinese to think that they had decided he was the new Dalai Lama.

Two or three days later, the team heard that the other boy mentioned by the Panchen Lama had come to Kumbum, so they went to give him the same tests. As in the first encounter with that child, their efforts to get him to respond to them were unsuccessful. Whatever they did, the boy refused to touch any of the items, real or duplicate.[16]

The team then sent a secret messenger to Lhasa to ask whether they should investigate the other twelve names they had collected or settle immediately on the Taktse boy. After a delay of several months, Lhasa's reply arrived: the Taktse boy was undoubtedly the real Dalai Lama; they should bring him to Lhasa as soon as possible (see Figure 31). However, by that time the team had become convinced that if they announced the selection openly, Ma Pu-fang might take the opportunity to send a large military escort to Tibet which then might not leave, or

16. This boy was later recognized to be an incarnation of another lama.



31.

Young 14th Dalai Lama (seated) in Amdo before he went to Lhasa in 1939

he might ask for large sums of money, or both. They therefore took an oath not to divulge the selection to anyone and then, instructing Lhasa to keep the secret, set about convincing Ma and the others in Kumbum that the Taktse boy was only a candidate. To allay local suspicions the team did test the other twelve boys, all at one time so that information about the test items would not spread through the area. None of these boys got even two items correct.

The Amdo team then informed Ma Pu-fang that the Taktse boy had performed somewhat better than the other boys but that no definite conclusion had been reached. They asked to have the boy brought from his house to Kumbum monastery. The search team continued the charade by cabling the test results to Lhasa, and the Tibetan government reciprocated by instructing the Amdo team to bring the Kumbum boy to Lhasa to join the other two "final" candidates for the final evaluation. The team asked Ma to help them arrange this, but after a few days Ma

asked why they were taking only that one boy. When the Tibetans responded that he was by far the best, Ma said they should contact his local office and the Kumbum monastery's chief administrative committee, the Lachi, and give them 100,000 silver coins (*dayan*) (equivalent to 7,000 to 8,000 pounds sterling).[17]

Ketsang Rimpoche informed Lhasa of this, and after some time had passed, the money arrived. Again he went to see Ma Pu-fang, but Ma continued to stall the travel arrangements. After many days, Ma told them that while he himself had no objection to the boy going to Lhasa, Kumbum monastery had stated that if the boy was the Dalai Lama then all the monasteries in the Kumbum area and all the local people wanted to receive his blessing before he left. Ma told the team to discuss this with the heads of the monastery.

The search team tried to convince the Kumbum monastic officials that the boy was only a candidate, but the officials insisted that they would not let the boy go to Lhasa until he was confirmed as the Dalai Lama. Kheme recalled that several of the young monks were so angry that they were on the verge of assaulting the team, who reiterated over and over that they did not have the power to declare the boy to be the Dalai Lama and that the final decision could only be made by oracles, lamas, tests, and so on. They tried to assuage the monks' anger by telling them that they could take blessings from the boy as a major candidate for the Dalai Lama, but the Kumbum monks remained adamant. During this time, the team was informally told that the Kumbum monastic officials actually had little authority in this matter: the final decision was in the hands of Ma Pu-fang. Desperate to get the young Dalai Lama to Tibet, the team again went to see Ma in Sining.

After a long delay, Ma agreed to permit the Taktse boy to go to Lhasa as a candidate, but in view of the difficulties this would cause with the monasteries and the people, he said he would need another 300,000 silver coins. Furthermore, the Kumbum monastery wanted a complete set of the late Dalai Lama's clothes, one of his thrones and

17. The pound equivalent derives from Gould 1941: 8. Gould says this was distributed as follows: 30,000 to the local government's Head Council, 30,000 to the local commander-in-chief, 30,000 to the amban "for equipment for the war against Japan," and 10,000 to the Kumbum monastery.

decorations, a 108-volume Kangyur written in gold, and a full set of the Tengyur. The search team responded that they could not give Ma any more money, but they agreed to supply the other items after they reached Tibet. Ma Pu-fang insisted on the money, so the search team was forced to remain in Kumbum awaiting instructions from Lhasa.[18]

At about this time, in the autumn or winter of 1938, the Tibetan government asked the Chinese Kuomintang government representatives in Nanking for help in persuading Ma to release the boy.[19] Two to three weeks later, Lhasa informed the search team that they would send the additional money soon. The team, fearing Ma would take the 300,000 *dayan* and then make further demands, replied that Lhasa should not send money until some sort of guarantee mechanism could be devised.[20] Thus 1938 passed with the young Dalai Lama candidate still under Chinese control.

The Kuomintang appear to have been willing to help extricate the Amdo candidate but presented a number of preconditions which the British Mission in Lhasa reported as follows: (1) the Tibetan government should decide at once which of the candidates was the real Dalai Lama; (2) if the choice were to fall on the Sining candidate, the Chinese government would forego the monetary payment; (3) the Chinese government must be allowed to send a representative to offer the regent a Chinese title at the arrival ceremony for the young Dalai Lama at Lhasa; (4) the people of Amdo should be allowed to pay their respects to the Dalai Lama on his journey, as was done when the 7th Dalai Lama traveled from China to Lhasa; and (5) a Chinese escort should accompany the new Dalai Lama, as was done for the 7th Dalai Lama. The British believed these conditions moderated an unknown earlier set of terms in which the Chinese apparently asked for representation at the

18. Kun rtse (Kusantse/Kheme) 1968: 70. Gould (1941: 8) reported that Ma told the Tibetans that because of the disturbed nature of the country, an escort would be needed and that this could not be produced without a further payment of 100,000 *dayan* to the commander-in-chief, 100,000 for the local Sining government, 20,000 for the troops who would provide the escort, 10,000 for Ma, and 100,000 for the Kumbum monastery.

19. Li (1960: 179) says the Tibetan government contacted the Nationalist government as early as 13 September 1938.

20. Kun rtse (Kusantse/Kheme) 1968: 70–71.

election of the Dalai Lama.[21] Li reports that the Nationalist government had in fact instructed Ma Pu-fang to "provide careful protection along the route" and that Ma in turn reported that he had appointed Major General Ma Yuan-hai as a special commissioner to escort the boy with a bodyguard battalion of 500 soldiers.[22]

The final communications between Lhasa and Nanking are not known. It is clear that the Kashag and the lönchen did not agree to these terms, but some agreement was reached, for on 29 March 1939, the Chinese government informed Tibet that they wanted to send the director of the Mongolian and Tibetan Commission to attend the selection and enthronement of the Dalai Lama. On 23 April, Tibet agreed to this so long as the Chinese representative came by sea.[23] Also in April, the Chinese government embassy in London applied to the British for travel permission and facilities in India for their delegation while en route to Lhasa for the election of the new Dalai Lama.[24]

Meanwhile, in Tsinghai, the Amdo search team discovered a group of rich Sining traders going on a pilgrimage to Mecca via India and conceived of an arrangement wherein the traders would advance the 300,000 silver coins for Ma Pu-fang and would later be repaid by the Tibetan government in rupees. Such an arrangement would give the Tibetans considerable leverage in dealing with Ma; for if Ma again rescinded his agreement, they in turn would not repay the traders when they reached India. Thus, the Moslem traders would in effect guarantee that Ma would honor his word and release the boy, and they would also serve as an escort for the Tibetans.[25]

Approached by Kheme and by Reting's personal representative in Sining, the Moslem traders readily agreed. As prominent figures in the

21. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, telegram from H. E. Richardson, British Mission in Lhasa, to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 26 April 1939; FO371/23492, telegram from Richardson, British Mission in Lhasa, to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 17 July 1939.

22. Li 1960: 179.

23. Ibid.: 180. Li's account of the Dalai Lama's selection and installation derives from Wu's report titled: *Ju Tsang pao kao*.

24. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, H. E. Richardson's "Report on Tibetan Affairs from October 1938 to September 1939."

25. Kun rtse (Kusantse/Kheme) 1968: 70–71.

Sining area, they felt they could trust Ma, and they would realize a considerable profit, given the Tibetan exchange rate. Ultimately all sides, including the Kumbum monastic officials, signed a binding document.[26]

On 17 July 1939 the Kashag received word from its representatives in China that the Amdo candidate would leave for Lhasa on 19 July. The Kashag, still leary of the Chinese escort, tried to postpone the departure, but the search team with the Amdo candidate left Amdo on 21 July, along with the large group of Moslem traders who served as their bodyguard. A month later, on 23 August, while the group was still en route, the Tibetan government and the Full National Assembly declared the Taktse boy to be the 14th Dalai Lama.[27] The records do not make clear why this was done before the group arrived, but it appears to have been a move to prevent the Chinese official en route to Lhasa for the enthronement ceremony from later claiming that he had had to be present to approve the Dalai Lama's selection.[28] Now that the boy was beyond the grasp of Ma Pu-fang, there was no longer a risk in naming him as the new Dalai Lama. The travelers reached the major Tibetan border outpost of Nagchuka in late September, and Lhasa on 8 October. The Tibetan government had once again avoided disaster, no doubt due to China's preoccupation with the Japanese problem and Ma Pu-fang's greater interest in money than in Sino-Tibetan political issues.

26. Ibid.; Gould (1941: 8) simply states that the traders were given an advantageous exchange rate. Tibetan money problems surfaced on 29 August, when a delegation of high Tibetan officials went to Richardson and told him that they urgently had to raise Rs. 90,000 and 220,000 *dayan*, owing to the high expenses incurred by their representatives in Sining. They requested permission from the Government of India to sell some silver that had been privately sent for sale to India by two officials but had been confiscated and returned to Yatung. (IOR, L/PS/12/4165, Richardson's "Report on Tibetan Affairs from October 1938 to September 1939.")

27. This assembly was known as the Tashi ("Good Fortune") Assembly and was convened when especially good news was to be announced.

28. Richardson commented on this in his "Report on Tibetan Affairs from October 1938 to September 1939," IOR, L/PS/12/4165. Richardson noted that throughout this proclamation and affirmation "it is noticeable that nothing was said about the selection being approved by the Chinese Government as had been done for every Dalai Lama since the Seventh. Thus the Tibetan Government appear to have asserted their independence in a most important matter."

THE ENTHRONEMENT CEREMONY

Tibetan custom required an enthronement ceremony in the Potala Palace on the golden throne of the Dalai Lamas (see Figures 32 and 33). Astrological calculations determined that the ceremony should start on 22 February 1940, during the first Tibetan month. About a month before this date, Wu Chung-tsin, chairman of the Mongolian and Tibetan Bureau, and Basil Gould, the political officer in Sikkim, arrived in Lhasa to attend the ceremonies. As with much else during this era, the enthronement ceremony became embroiled in the "Tibet question," and British and Chinese accounts differ widely.

The Tibetan government proposed to Gould that he attend the ceremonies on the twenty-third, although the Chinese, Nepalese, Ladakhis, and Bhutanese were attending on the twenty-second. Gould explains this as follows:

> The Tibetan Government proposed that the British mission should attend with their gifts on the second day and enquired whether they would desire to be present on the first day also. They were careful to point out that there was no question of the British Mission not being welcome on the first day. The consideration was whether a more personal appearance on the first day, when there would be no occasion for the presentation of gifts, would tend to detract from the effect of a more official, and also more intimate, appearance on the second day, when there would be opportunity for the presentation with due ceremony of the gifts which were to be offered in token of the felicitations and goodwill of His Majesty's Government and of the Viceroy of India.[29]

The true explanation, however, appears to be that the Tibetans had decided to treat the Chinese representative with special honor on the twenty-second and did not want to provoke a confrontation with the British. The evidence for this comes from several sources. Gould himself wrote that Wu was given a raised seat placed slightly in advance of the seats of the other foreigners and, like the seats of the Dalai Lama and his family, facing south instead of west. The Chinese were also allowed to file before the Dalai Lama's throne for his blessing just after

29. Gould 1941: 17.



32.

Young 14th Dalai Lama in Lhasa



33.

Father and mother of 14th Dalai Lama
(ca. 1940)

the Tibetan incarnations, which was earlier than the usual time for foreigners. Beyond these privileges, however, Wu had no special function in the ceremony.[30] The Tibetan government exerted itself to give the British equal treatment, by granting them an exclusive audience with the Dalai Lama at which they could present their gifts.

The Chinese version of their role in the enthronement ceremonies

30. Ibid.: 17–20.

derives from Wu's report and makes it appear as though Tibet were under Chinese control. Li, citing that report, wrote:

> Wu was supposed to come to Lhasa to supervise the oracle revelation and lot-drawing procedures for the purpose of choosing the true incarnation out of the three candidates. But upon his arrival he found that the regent had eliminated the two other candidates and the candidate from Kokonor [Amdo] was the only claimant to the Pontiff Chair. The Chinese Mission, of course, supported the pro-Chinese Regent. As a matter of procedure, it demanded that a request should be made by the Regent to the National Government for the exemption of the lot-drawing process, and that the boy should be identified by Mr. Wu in a private interview. To this the Regent readily expressed his consent.[31]
>
> Thus, on January 26, 1940, the Regent sent Mr. Wu a communication asking the Central Government to confirm La-mu-tan-chu as the reincarnation of Dalai Lama without the performance of drawing lots. The communication stated that after many investigations and according to all the indications, this boy has been proved without any doubt to be the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama.[32]

Considering Sino-Tibetan relations at that time, Wu's version of China's role is implausible. The Tibetan government would have wanted to show respect and courtesy to the Chinese government, but it seems inconceivable that they would ask China's *permission* to dispense with the Chinese-instituted "golden urn" selection process that had in fact already been ignored in the selection of the 13th Dalai Lama. As

31. Ya (1986: 876–78) presents information from Wu's assistant suggesting that it was Reting Rimpoche who was eager to please the Chinese. He states that Reting agreed to demands of Wu that he be allowed to "examine" the qualities of the young Dalai Lama in a private meeting, and that Reting send the Chinese government a request for permission to forego the Golden Urn ceremony. He also indicates, however, that when Wu tried to get the Chigyab Khembo to arrange such an "examination" meeting, the Chigyab Khembo refused, saying that the choice of the Dalai Lama had already been made by the Tibetan National Assembly and could not be changed. Wu, furious, notified Reting of this, and the latter immediately apologized and arranged a private meeting for him which took place on 1 February. Four days later, the Chinese government announced worldwide that after examining the candidate in Lhasa they approved him as the new Dalai Lama. Although all of this was clearly done by Reting to maintain his labrang's friendly relations with China rather than because Tibet actually had to secure China's agreement to the Tibetan government's actions, it reflects Reting's political naiveté and his reluctance to accept the advice of senior government officials.

32. Li 1960: 181–82.

was indicated above, the main reason for officially recognizing the Dalai Lama while he was still en route from Amdo was precisely to avoid later Chinese claims that they had participated in his selection.

Wu's instructions also included trying to improve Tibetan feelings toward China, and to this end, he presented generous gifts to the monks and lamas.[33] He was also charged with probing Tibetan sentiments regarding Sino-Tibetan rapprochement and, on 10 March, his assistants opened discussion with the Kashag on three basic political issues: the improvement of communications between Tibet and China—in other words, the status of Tibet vis-à-vis China; the return of the Panchen Lama's remains to Tibet; and terms for the return of the Panchen's followers to Tibet.[34]

Three weeks later, on 2 April, the Kashag replied to Wu in writing that Tibet would be happy to receive the remains of the late Panchen Lama but also wanted to know where his possessions were. As regards the return of the Panchen's followers and the Sino-Tibetan political issue, they reiterated Tibet's hope that areas in Chinese-held Kham such as Derge and Nyarong would be returned to Tibet, and indicated that until this issue was addressed they could not discuss improvements in communications. Wu, seeing no prospect for progress toward a rapprochement, left for China on 14 April 1940.[35]

Before leaving, he also tried to formalize the status of the Chinese Mission in Lhasa. By 1939, the two Chinese liaison officers who had been left by Huang Mu-sung in 1934 had either died or left Tibet. The office remained open but was being run by a low-status wireless operator. Wu's visit to Lhasa was used by the Chinese government to upgrade the office and thus the Chinese presence in Tibet.

On 13 March, Wu had sent an officer to the regent to discuss the establishment of a Chinese high commissioner in Tibet. In his report, Wu stated that the regent objected instantly, saying that the internal situation of Tibet was delicate and complex and that, in accordance with the practice established by the late Dalai Lama, such matters had to be referred to the National Assembly, which was certain not to accept

33. Bshad sgra (Shatra) 1983: 85–89.
34. Li 1960: 184.
35. Ibid.

this proposal. The regent pointed out that Gould was in Lhasa and the Tibetan government did not want to provoke a similar response from the British. When Wu reported this to Nanking, he was instructed to reconstitute the existing office as a branch office of the Chinese government's Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. Wu, however, had by this time realized that the Tibetan government would not formally agree to any Chinese presence in Tibet. Thus, instead of requesting permission, he simply notified the regent and the Kashag in writing of his intention to inaugurate such an office. He followed this by sending his aides to explain the meaning of the office.[36] What these aides told the Tibetans is not known, but the Tibetan government ignored the change. The Tibetans did not agree to the new name, but they never objected to it either. They simply treated it as irrelevant, continuing to interact with the Chinese exactly as before. From the Tibetan point of view, neither the British Mission nor the Chinese Mission in Lhasa had any legal status; they were allowed to remain only to avoid giving offence.

RETING TAKES CONTROL

This period began a time of heightened tension and discord in Tibet as a result of the actions and policies of Reting, the regent.

After Trimön resigned in 1936, Reting Rimpoche gradually assumed total control of the administration. He became increasingly autocratic, while at the same time his private life became more blatantly hedonistic—he appears to have had sexual relationships with men and women,[37] to have filled his time with amusements such as kite-flying and shooting,[38] and to have spent money lavishly. His labrang during

36. Ibid.: 186.

37. Reting's affairs with women were documented in personal letters that were exhibited by the Tibetan government in 1947 following his arrest. This facet of his behavior is discussed in more detail toward the end of this chapter.

38. Nyungne Lama, the business head of Reting Labrang, once complained to R. D. Tsarong in Reting's presence that Reting wasted great sums of money on useless things. He cited the example of Reting having spent 75 *dotse* that year just to fly his kites (Tsarong [Rimshi], interview).

these years became one of the three largest trading companies in Tibet,[39] and the most infamous, due to its exploitative trading practices.

A Tibetan official who had been part of Reting's pilgrimage to southern Tibet and to Lake Lhamolatso recalls Reting's love for amusement: "The Regent was a very happy and carefree person by nature. He would send the Government Officials on ahead of him and he would come later with his friends and attendants. Sometimes they would stop on the way. they would sing along the way and I was told the Regent would take part in shooting competitions."[40]

Several on-the-spot assessments of Reting's character are illuminating. Although the British at this time saw Reting as sympathetic to their interests, H. E. Richardson, their officer in Lhasa, wrote: "In my opinion the Regent is governed by self-interest. He has no fixed policy and his actions are dictated by momentary considerations"[41] Ngagchen Rimpoche, the Panchen Lama's representative in Lhasa, described Reting in October 1936 as "being hopelessly venal, even in small matters and disinclined to view any matter otherwise than from the point of view of his own financial advantage."[42]

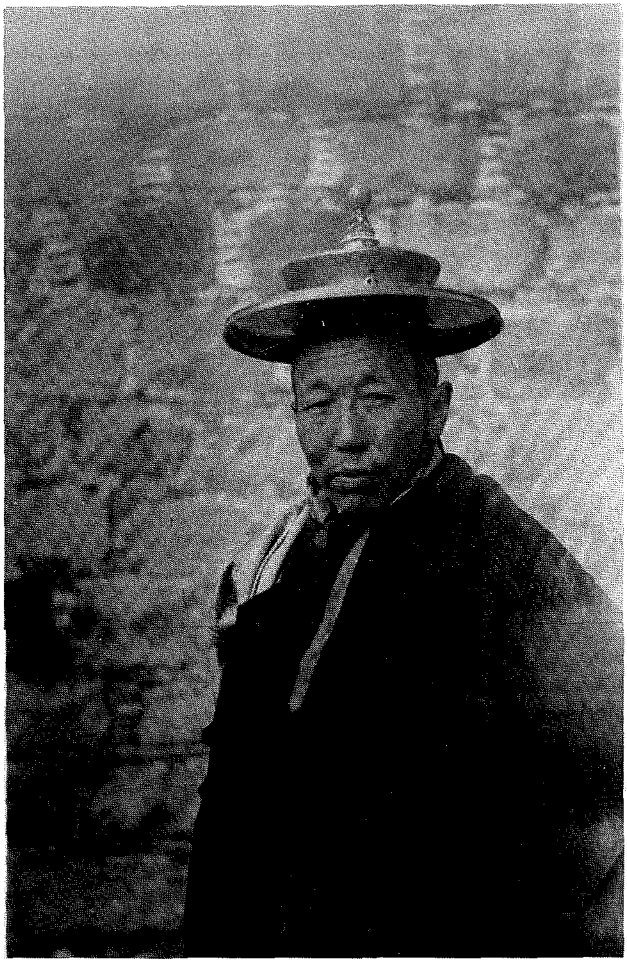
These negative facets of Reting's character were not initially apparent to Tibetans, who universally considered him a true and great incarnation. Beginning in 1938, however, a series of events occurred that undermined Reting's position. In that year, Reting, irritated by the frank advice and admonishments of his old manager (see Figure 34), forced his resignation and replaced him with a young and inexperienced relative of Reting's, Jampey Gyentsen. There followed a three-year reign of willful, unpredictable behavior.

39. The other two trading companies were Pandatsang and Sandutsang, and the three were collectively known as Ra-pa-sa-sum (sum = three).

40. Shakabpa, interview. These comments were not offered in criticism of the regent but, rather, as a description of Reting's behavior on the trip. Similarly, the uncle of a loyal servant of Reting's recalled how Reting first became aware of his nephew when he volunteered to let Reting shoot an apple from his outstretched palm à la William Tell (Thubten Thuwang, interview).

41. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, report of the British Mission in Lhasa for the year from October 1938 to September 1939.

42. IOR, L/PS/12/4186B, record of conversation cited in telegram from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 4 November 1936. It should be recalled that Reting desired the Panchen Lama's return; Ngagchen Rimpoche's comments therefore cannot be passed off as bitterness toward an enemy.



34.

Reting Dzasa (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

In October 1938 Reting suddenly removed Yuthok as commander of the prestigious Bodyguard Regiment. This removal supposedly stemmed from the regent's having "induced" Yuthok to buy a horse from him at an excessive price. Yuthok's subsequent resale of the horse at a lower price seemed to Reting to be Yuthok's demonstration that Reting had cheated him, so Reting retaliated by appointing Yuthok to a sinecure with no responsibilities.

Shortly after this, Reting very adroitly forced his co-ruler Langdün to resign, leaving himself the sole ruler of Tibet. Reting had early begun to chafe at the need to consult with Langdün on decisions and to use as their joint seal of office a seal that had been made for an earlier lönchen. Previous regents had ruled alone, and Reting's pride demanded no less. However, it was only when Langdün disagreed with him over the search for the 14th Dalai Lama that Reting acted. Langdün not only initially supported the candidacy of his relative, Yabshi Phawpön's son, but, more important, sided with the Kashag in refusing to capitulate to Chinese demands to obtain the release of the Amdo candidate, the new Dalai Lama. Reting, on the other hand, saw the discovery of the Amdo boy as his greatest personal achievement and felt that vague future political implications were of less importance than enthroning the new Dalai Lama. He ultimately came to believe that Langdün was not passing messages from the search party in Amdo to him. Believing that Langdün's obstructionism was still an attempt by him to get Yabshi Phawpön's son recognized as the new Dalai Lama (the boy was eventually recognized as Ditru Rimpoche), he decided to rid himself of Langdün.[43]

During the Tshongcö Prayer Festival in the second Tibetan month

43. The abbot of Reting monastery reflects this view in his explanation of Langdün's downfall: "Ketsang Rimpoche and his staff sent many reports to Lhasa indicating that the Amdo boy was the true incarnation, but Lönchen Langdün blocked these reaching Reting directly. . . . Langdün's aim at that time was to get Ditru Rimpoche recognized as the new Dalai Lama." (Rwa sgreng mkhan po 1985: 80.) This was also clearly stated by Ye shes tshul khrims (1986: 60–61), an important Reting advisor who wrote, "At that time, because the Silön Langdün contended that the 13th Dalai Lama's incarnation was Ditru Rimpoche, a disagreement occurred and he had to step down from office." Song Rimpoche, a very knowledgeable ex-abbot of Ganden monastery, also supported this explanation. He recalled having heard that Langdün was interfering with or obstructing communications from the Amdo team and that was what led Reting to orchestrate Langdün's dismissal.

(roughly March–April 1939), Reting arranged for one of the Three Seats abbots who was his close supporter to inform the other assembled abbots that Reting was having difficulties in conducting his duties and suggest that the Three Seats take action to help him. The other abbots agreed, realizing that this plea had been initiated by Reting himself, or, as one lama tactfully explained, "The light radiated from Reting's heart to the abbots of the Three Seats."[44] The abbots told the Kashag they had heard that the high authorities were having difficulties executing their duties and asked the Kashag to convene the National Assembly. The shapes responded that they were astonished; their group had no problems and they had not heard that Langdün or Reting had any. The abbots insisted, and the shapes agreed to convene a joint meeting of the eight Trungtsi, themselves, and the abbots.

The abbots drafted a statement to present at the meeting. Since it would be inappropriate, and perhaps even dangerous, to state blatantly that Reting was having difficulties with Langdün, they added two points to camouflage their real aim:

1. It is important to select and enthrone the Dalai Lama as soon as possible.
2. In the past, because of the strategic importance of Kham, a shape was appointed as governor-general, but for some years only officials of the dzasa rank have been sent there. This is not good: a shape should be sent as soon as possible.
3. If there are any problems in the smooth and effective execution of government duties and activities, these should be discussed and rectified.[45]

The Kashag answered the first point by saying that they were moving as fast as they could. As proof, they showed the abbots all the letters and cables from the search parties; these papers took the abbots two full days to read. In reply to the second point, they said that a shape was going to be sent to Kham very shortly. Regarding the third point, the real issue, they again stated that they knew of no problems or difficulties and wondered what the abbots meant by their insinuations.

44. Song Rimpoche, interview.
45. Anon1, interview; Song Rimpoche, interview.

When the abbots continued to insist only that there were unspecified problems, the shapes went to the regent and lönchen directly about this matter. Langdün of course said he had had no difficulties, but, to the amazement of the Kashag and the trungtsi, Reting replied affirmatively: there were such problems, and he was planning to resign because of them. The shapes pleaded with Reting not to do such a thing, since Reting, as a lama, was critical for the confirmation of the new Dalai Lama. Reting merely continued to declare his intent to resign.

On 14 April 1939, the Kashag convened the Abbreviated National Assembly to discuss the regent's resignation.[46] Since the delegates did not know the source of Reting's unhappiness, however, even though they were unanimous in wanting to do anything possible to remove the regent's problems, they were stymied. They therefore took the unprecedented step of going en masse from the Tsuglagang to Reting's labrang in Lhasa to meet with him in person.

As soon as they arrived, they requested an audience with the regent. All prostrated before him and pleaded with him not to resign. After reiterating his intention, Reting finally told them that the present dual regency made the administration of the country very difficult. He likened the situation to having one Buddhism, but two different Buddhas.[47] For example, he said he would decide to punish some official, but then Langdün would warn the official, and the official's wife and family would come to Reting begging him not to do what he had planned. Reting complained that this kind of working at cross-purposes was making it extremely difficult for him to rule and thus it was best that he resign. In essence, then, Reting said that Langdün had not been doing his job properly and was obstructing him from carrying out his duties.[48]

The assembly delegates returned and met that same evening. Immediately, even before the delegates could settle down and have tea, the Töba Abbot of Sera stood up on his knees (it is normal to speak from a

46. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, Lhasa Mission reports by H. E. Richardson dated 16 April and 23 April 1939.

47. In Tibetan: *bstan pa gcig la ston pa gnyis*.

48. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, Lhasa Mission reports by H. E. Richardson, dated 16 April and 23 April 1939.

cross-legged position) and said, "Now we know what problems the regent is facing and we have to make our decision. Do we want to keep Langdün or Reting Rimpoche? Reting has told us that the Lönchen is the main source of his problems. Haven't we decided to remove his problems? Thus now we must at once request Langdün to offer his resignation."[49] Although the overwhelming majority agreed with this view, some felt apprehension about whether Langdün would refuse and muster support to launch a counterattack to expel Reting. Thus it was decided that although Langdün would have to relinquish participation in administrative affairs, he could retain his title and his salary estate and could still attend all official ceremonies. The trungtsi reported their decision to the Kashag, and that same night they agreed to present it to Langdün. The question on everyone's mind was whether Langdün would acquiesce or fight.

The next morning the Kashag's shapes themselves went to Langdün and informed him of the assembly's decision. Langdün, although furious, decided not to contest it. He agreed to resign if it was done in the way that the assembly indicated. He later explained his forced resignation to Richardson, the British Resident official in Lhasa:

> [Langdün] said that all kinds of rumours had been circulating in Lhasa, and that it was said that he was not sufficiently zealous in attempting to secure the return of the Dalai Lama. He declared that he had done his best within the limits of his intelligence which was not great [typical Tibetan polite phraseology], and that the decision to remove him came as a sudden shock. He asked the National Assembly what he had done wrong and they replied only that his services were not needed. He said that although this put him greatly to shame he was now content with his lot.[50]

By April 1939, Reting was the sole ruler of Tibet. All rivals had been eliminated, and his power had been enhanced by the unprecedented vote of confidence he had just received from the assembly and the Kashag. Reting's concern with his own image immediately manifested itself: he said he no longer wanted to use the seal that he had shared with Langdün, and he ordered the creation of two new seals (one of

49. Anon1, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
50. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, letter from H. E. Richardson to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 21 October 1939.

gold and one of silver) for his reign. These were presented to him on 28 May 1939.[51]

Behind the scenes, however, dissent was forming. This attack on the hapless Langdün was resented by many officials who saw it as wrong to discard the late Dalai Lama's nephew and appointee, who, they felt, had only been trying to serve the interests of the Tibetan state.

A Lhasa street song criticized Reting:

> It is easy
> to break the horn of a bull.
> [But] if the goat goes fast,
> there is a danger of slipping and falling on a rock.[52]

The bull is Langdün; the first syllable of his name means "bull." The goat is Reting.

In the years 1938–1940, other incidents increasingly alienated segments of the bureaucratic elite. For one, the death of Trentong Shape in September 1938 opened a position on the Kashag.[53] The leading candidates for this position were Khyungram, Sambo, Phünkang, and Kapshöba (see Figures 35 and 36). Khyungram, a senior lay official who was then governor of Hor (the northern districts), had been a supporter of Reting and had apparently been promised the next vacant shape position by him. Khyungram was also the first choice of the Kashag. Khyungram consequently returned from his post in northern Tibet to Lhasa in grand style, fully confident that he would be appointed shape. However, Reting's monk-official lover, Phünkang Jetrungla, persuaded Reting to appoint his father, embittering Khyungram and a number of senior officials.[54]

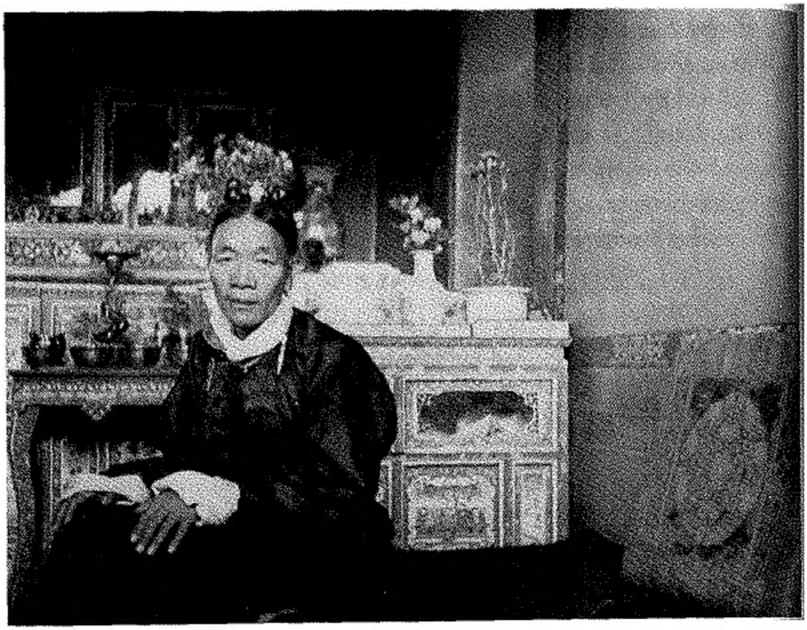
In August 1939, Reting eliminated another senior official, the respected monk-shape Tregang. Tregang apparently had been critical of both the Langdün affair and the regent's unwillingness to allow the Kashag to negotiate judiciously with Ma Pu-fang and Chiang Kai-shek. Reting's response was to summon Tregang to his office and tell him

51. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, letter from H. E. Richardson to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 21 May 1939; Lhasa Mission Report, dated 21 May 1939.

52. In Tibetan: *glang gi rwa co gcod par / las su sla po 'dug te / rwa pho rgyugs rtsal che na / rdo la zhabs 'dred shor yong.*

53. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, H. E. Richardson's "Report on Tibetan Affairs from October 1938 to September 1939."

54. Horsur, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Surkhang, interview.



35.

Phünkang in his sitting room before he became a shape (1936) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

that he would like his resignation at once. Tregang complied and the regent appointed Temba Jayan in his place. Tregang later told the British resident official in Lhasa that his position in the Kashag had become too difficult for him to carry on.[55]

At about the same time, Reting performed another of his increasingly willful acts. This one involved Kheme, one of the aristocratic lay officials who headed the Laja treasury. The practice of officials borrowing money or goods from government treasuries to use in their own

55. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, letter from H. E. Richardson to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 25 August 1939; IOR, L/PS/12/4178, Lhasa Mission Diary, dated September 1939. Reting's supporters spread the malicious rumor that after being ordered to resign Tregang tried unsuccessfully to bribe Reting to allow him to remain (ibid.).



36.

Khyungram (photo courtesy of H. E. Richardson)

private businesses had been prohibited by the late 13th Dalai Lama because it had become common for such officials not to pay interest on these loans—if, in fact, they ever repaid them at all. Under the Reting regency, this practice had gradually reemerged. Thus, in 1939, when a wealthy trader from Kham donated a large amount of gold as endowment for the monks at the Mönlam Prayer Festival, representatives

from Reting Labrang came to Kheme to borrow some of the money.[56] Normally, the Laja officials would not have dared refuse such a request, but Kheme was deeply critical of the deterioration of ethics and morals during the Reting regency and refused the request, sarcastically asking the Reting officials, "Don't you think it is necessary to have something left in the treasuries for when the new Dalai Lama takes over?" The regent, though incensed by the refusal and particularly by Kheme's comments, could not simply punish him for doing his job. He searched for an unrelated misstep to use in retaliation. Not long after this, Kheme apparently made a mistake on a report regarding repair work in the Norbulinga Palace that had not been completed, and also took leave to go to a hot springs for his health without performing the formal departure and arrival visits to the regent.[57] Although these breaches were very trivial, Reting used them to expel Kheme, in a most demeaning manner, from the ranks of officials. During the autumn Tibetan opera performance held in Lhasa on the grounds of Reting's labrang, Reting summoned Kheme. Before hundreds of people, he performed the traditional dismissal ceremony during which Kheme's hair knot, brocade robe, and official shoes were removed. Reting compounded the negative impact of his act by appointing one of his supporters, Cogtray, in Kheme's place, even though Cogtray's name was not on the list of candidates submitted by the Tsigang and the Kashag.[58] Cogtray's wife (see Figure 37), it should be noted, was widely considered to have been Reting's lover.[59] This incident further embittered many government officials.

KHYUNGRAM VERSUS RETING

Reting's most unpopular act during this period was his destruction of the lay aristocratic official Khyungram and his family. On 11 October

56. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 48–49. Other versions of this incident have the regent's people asking for a loan of a new shipment of brocade.

57. Kheme later said that his request for a leave of absence to go to the hot springs had indicated that there would be no departure and arrival audiences.

58. IOR, L/PS/12/4178, letter from H. E. Richardson to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 25 August 1939; IOR, L/PS/12/4165, Richardson's "Report on Tibetan Affairs from October 1938 to September 1939."

59. Dardo (Rimpoche), interview.



37.

Cogtray and his wife, Namkye Tsedron (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

1939, three days after the arrival of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, the National Assembly was convened to discuss four issues: first, that of giving the Dalai Lama's family a house in Lhasa; second, prohibiting the public and officials from seeing the Dalai Lama in a private audience; third, granting manorial estates, and serfs to the Dalai Lama's parents, who were to become an aristocratic family using the name Taktse; and, fourth, conferring promotions and other rewards on the officials who had been involved in the search for and discovery of the new Dalai Lama.[60]

After three days of discussion, all issues were settled, although a decision as to just which estates and which rewards were to be given was deferred until a later date. This consensus soon ended when Reting's monastic supporter Yeshe Chungney, the ex-abbot of Gyepa college of Drepung monastery, suggested that the regent should also be rewarded for the critical part he had played in discovering the Dalai Lama, and that his reward should be substantial, in keeping with the importance of his accomplishment.[61]

Other monastic representatives supported Yeshe Chungney's recommendation, most of them suggesting that Reting should be given five or six government estates as his reward. A few monastic representatives also suggested that the government should completely renovate Reting Labrang. Then Gyentsen Sengge, the Töba Abbot of Sera monastery, expounded at length on Reting's achievements and loudly stated that Reting should be given, at the very least, fifty or sixty of the best government estates and districts.[62] Most lay government officials, however, objected to impoverishing the government by giving the already wealthy regent one more estate, much less fifty or sixty.

This attitude also stemmed from the increasing anger at this time regarding the regent's abuse of his position to generate profit for his labrang. Reting's traders, using the name of the regent, had become

60. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, report of the British Mission in Lhasa for the month of December 1939 (written by Norbhu Döndup). This report mentions that the assembly was also convened to discuss giving Reting a reward. Lha'u rta ra's (Lhautara) account (1986: 116) states that the issue of Reting's reward was raised by the monastic representatives, and this is more convincing.

61. Lha'u rta ra 1986: 116–17.

62. Ibid.

infamous. For example, when they arrived in a district, typically they would tell the government's district commissioner that they were from Reting Labrang and wanted help in bartering tea, cloth, or other goods to the nomads and herders in return for wool which they would collect at a later time. The commissioner would then pressure local people to deal with them. Moreover, they often dealt dishonestly; for example, they might initially indicate an exchange rate of one bale of wool for one brick of tea, but later demand two or more bales per brick of tea. By then the herders would have consumed the tea, so felt obligated to pay the higher amount. Theoretically, they could have brought suit against the regent's traders, but that would have been not only anti-religious but also expensive and, probably, futile.

The Töba Abbot's suggestions, therefore, provoked open opposition from several lay officials. Lukhang said that while everyone was grateful to the regent, "the precious estates of the government could not be squandered. We are all caretakers for His Holiness the Dalai Lama so we have to think of conserving all the resources to turn them over to him. We have to pull hair from inside our noses," he said, meaning that all the government officials should contribute something *individually* for the regent's reward to show appreciation. All the trungtsi, particularly Trunyichemmo Dombo, also spoke against giving a large number of estates to the regent.[63]

When the abbots continued to demand a large reward for Reting, Khyungram, a senior lay official, spoke out. He said that although he recognized the great contribution the regent had made in finding the new Dalai Lama, the servants (the government officials and the monk representatives) could not make decisions on behalf of the master (the Dalai Lama), meaning that they could not give away land that belonged to the inheritance of the Dalai Lama. He continued that the treasuries were empty, and the young Dalai Lama had yet to make his entry into the monasteries, an event that involved very substantial expenses. Khyungram indicated that though he and the rest of the assembly were deeply grateful to the regent, who certainly deserved a reward, if the Assembly now gave him estates and districts the government would be unable to meet its commitments. He seconded Lukhang's idea that the

63. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

officials should contribute a cash gift to the regent or that a one-time head tax should be imposed on all individuals in Tibet. In the course of his long-winded commentary he talked about the behavior of the Tibetan military officers in Eastern Tibet during a previous war, saying that while some commanders died and others lost all their possessions, a few ordered their soldiers into battle but themselves avoided combat. These commanders, he said, were not content to have avoided risking injury, but went so far as to act as if they had achieved great success in battle. At this point he quoted a Tibetan saying that conveyed extreme greed:

> After eating the mountain, hunger is not satiated.
> After drinking the ocean, thirst is not quenched.[64]

Khyungram apparently did not intend this as a direct accusation of greed on the part of the regent, but he could not finish because the Töba Abbot immediately stood up and interrupted him in a loud voice, demanding to know whether his remark was directed at the regent. The Töba Abbot said, "As far as I and the world knows, Reting has not asked anything for the work he has done but we have gathered here to give him a reward as a token of our love and respect for him. But you have spoken so much publicly that now you must say whether you are hinting at Reting Rimpoche or not, and if not, you must withdraw your statements and swallow your own words." Khyungram, an extremely proud and hot-tempered man, replied that his comments were not intended to be taken in all kinds of ways, but that the abbot was welcome to believe what he wished. "You and your supporters may do whatever you like."[65]

Ultimately, the assembly decided to recommend to the Kashag three options for Reting's reward: presentation of two or three government estates to Reting, renovation of Reting Labrang, or a money gift collected from all government officials.[66]

64. In Tibetan: *ri bo bzas nas mi 'grangs / rgya mtsho 'thung nas mi ngom.*

65. Shakabpa claimed he did not say this, but others such as Sambo (Rimshi), Surkhang, Horsur, and Anon1 insisted that he did (interviews).

66. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) (1986: 121–23). He relates that the next day, when the assembly officials were supposed to come to place their seals on the decision, Kapshöba, one of the tsipöns, came early and secretly altered the draft recommendation so that it

Despite the general agreement to reward Reting, the nature of the discussion and, particularly, Khyungram's comments were humiliating for the regent. Khyungram, on the other hand, immediately became the hero of the government-official corps. He had stood up and challenged the regent and his abbot surrogates and had expressed feelings others did not dare to display openly. Khyungram apparently enjoyed basking in the adulation of his peers and thus was induced to compound his initial mistake.

In view of the trivial grounds for which Reting had dismissed Kheme, this blatant insult could be expected to provoke a far worse response from Reting. Khyungram's friends and relatives who were also close to Reting told him that these were bad times and, "like butter being hit by a stone or a stone being hit by butter," the result will be destruction, so they implored him to tell the regent humbly that he had meant nothing personal by what he had said. Khyungram ignored this advice and is said to have even told Khardo Rimpoche, one of Reting's closest inner advisors, "I have done nothing wrong and have nothing to hide. If someone tries to harm me then I shall put my folded hands behind my back and say a few words in the Barkor [the circular road in the center of the city that is the heart of Lhasa]." Supposedly, he also implied to his friends that he could reveal certain secrets about Reting.[67]

Soon after this, Reting found an unrelated transgression through

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read that the regent was to be given *all* three of the options. Shakabpa, one of the two officials writing the final copy of the draft recommendation, says that Kapshöba asked for the draft, made some changes, and then told him to make the copy immediately. He and his partner, however, were suspicious and stalled until the other trungtsi officials came by. When the first two trungtsi officials arrived they immediately asked whether the copying of the recommendation had been completed. Shakabpa responded that they had not started it yet and gave them the draft Kapshöba had altered. They looked at it and then at each other but said nothing. Soon after this the senior trunyichemmo, Dombo, arrived and also asked if the copy was completed. At this point one of the other trungtsi officials told Dombo to look at the altered draft. When Dombo saw what had been done he was so angry he shook. He said, "Ke [a derogatory term] Kapshöba, we may have to cut off your hand" (in Tibetan: *skad ka shod pa mdzog mgo breg dgos byed yong nga*). Shakabpa says that Kapshöba mumbled "I'm sorry" and crossed out his changes (Shakabpa, interview). In the end the original proposal wherein one of the three options was to be selected as the reward was restored. Dombo's anti-Reting stance soon after resulted in his being promoted to a sinecure (the rank of Khenche) without responsibilities.

67. Anon1, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

which to avenge himself on Khyungram. One of Reting's attendants at this time was the father of a personal attendant of Kapshöba, and thus Kapshöba came to know that Reting was very upset by Khyungram's actions. Kapshöba, eager to obtain the position of shape, saw this as a perfect opportunity to ingratiate himself with the regent by helping to provide Reting with a pretext for destroying Khyungram. Kapshöba had been the governor-general of the Hor area before Khyungram and knew the people and area well; of course, he also knew exactly how the governors extracted profit from the peasantry. There are two versions of the way he used this background to damage Khyungram. In one version, which Khyungram himself believed, Kapshöba induced a number of important Hor residents who were visiting Lhasa to file a petition against Khyungram.[68] In the other version, the group of Hor people purposely came to Lhasa to protest Khyungram's excesses and applied to Kapshöba for advice.[69] In either case a petition was filed,[70] charging Khyungram with taking bribes and with causing hardship to the people by traveling in an extravagant style, thus forcing the people to provide him with many horses.[71] By the ethical standards of the day, these were relatively petty issues.

Khyungram was ordered to appear before an investigating committee to discuss these charges but twice refused to go, primarily because it was composed of two trunyichemmo and two tsipöns, one of whom was Kapshöba, the person he believed had engineered the whole affair. Instead he secretly prepared his own petition to send to the National Assembly and the Three Seats, explaining his actions and apparently attacking Reting's behavior. He also appealed for help from the parents of the new Dalai Lama, on the grounds that his actions to preserve estates for the government were on behalf of their son. They promised to help him, but actually made only a halfhearted attempt to intervene.[72]

68. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1986: 126.
69. Horsur, interview.
70. Anon1 (interview) says that this was composed by Kapshöba's secretary. Khe smad (Kheme) (1982: 51) disagrees and says that the person who sent the appeal was Khyungpo Trunyi Phula.
71. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 51. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) (1986: 124) simply says the charge was that Khyungram had exploited and abused the populace.
72. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, report (by Norbhu Döndup) from the British Lhasa Mission for the month of June 1940.

A Nyingmapa lama who was Khyungram's "root" (main) lama told Kapshöba that Khyungram was preparing a petition, and where he kept it. Kapshöba informed Reting, who immediately arrested Khyungram (on 22 May 1940). Khyungram, who was in his late fifties, was taken on foot by armed soldiers to Reting's residence in Lhasa, where the formal demotion ceremony took place. Khyungram's house was sealed, and the sealing officers, Lhautara and Dorje Phüntso, carefully went through his letters and correspondence until Dorje Phüntso found the petition. It is clear that he had been instructed where to search and what to look for and that Khyungram had been arrested in order to secure access to his house. The petition said that Khyungram had done nothing wrong and that it was Kapshöba who had orchestrated false charges against him; it then reiterated what Khyungram had said in the assembly.[73] The draft copy of the petition also listed a series of complaints against the regent and asked for a meeting of the National Assembly to consider them.[74] Finally, it said, "We are all servants of the Government and we cannot decide such things at this stage. Even though I have served the Government faithfully, I am now being accused. Hence I appeal to the monk and lay community to support someone who stands for the truth. I have served the government and the government has been good to me. I desire still to continue to serve the government."[75] This request could, according to Tibetan norms, be construed as an attempt to persuade the National Assembly to remove Reting.

This draft petition contained several handwriting styles in addition to Khyungram's, indicating that others were involved at least in editing the petition. Identifying these others became a matter of concern to the regent. Khyungram was interrogated by whipping but never admitted to wrongdoing or revealed the other writers.[76] Although his petition had never been submitted, he was convicted of conspiring to overthrow the government and he and his family were totally destroyed. His estates were confiscated and his property sold; his two wives were sent back to their original families; his descendants were banned from enter-

73. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1986: 126.

74. Khyung ram (Khyungram) 1986: 135. The author, Khyungram Teiji's son, says, "It was a petition which challenged the Regent."

75. Anon1, interview.

76. Horsur, interview; Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1986: 127–28.

ing government service; and he himself was publicly given one hundred lashes and sent to exile in a monastery in remote Western Tibet in Rutok under the supervision of monks from Sera Che college, Reting's monastic college.

With regard to the other handwritings, the government interrogated Khyungram's servants and found out that Gacan Demba, Khyungram's close relative who had just returned from exile for his role in the Lungshar party, was involved. When he was arrested and whipped, he quickly confessed to correcting the petition. All his property was confiscated and he was exiled to Sangnga Chödzong in Southeast Tibet. After receiving "farewell" public floggings, he and Khyungram were sent into exile on 6 June 1940.[77]

The other handwriting was recognized as that of the powerful Bönshö Shape.[78] Reting planned to demote him, but when Bönshö got wind of this he appealed to a favorite of Reting's, the monk-shape Temba Jayan, to intercede on his behalf. Bönshö apparently gave Temba Jayan a substantial gift and swore to support him in the future, and Temba Jayan convinced Reting to punish Bönshö only by a fine of ten gold coins (*sang*).[79]

In the eyes of most Lhasa officials, Khyungram's punishment was excessive and vindictive and was inflicted on an official who was standing up, not for his own personal gain, but for the interests of the government. This and the Kheme incident symbolized the depths to which the Reting regency had fallen in its final years. More than anything else, the last years of the Reting regency taught the aristocracy that their best strategy for protecting their family name and estates was to mind their own business and not to take controversial stands. Tibet was to pay dearly for this attitude in the next decade.

At this time in Lhasa a series of anti-Reting songs appeared:

> The wings of the eagle have been broken,
> the bile of the bear has been taken out.
> If you harm the Naga,
> pimples will grow on your face.

77. IOR, L/PS/12/4193, Lhasa Diary of the British Mission for the month of June 1940.
78. Khyung ram (Khyungram) 1986: 135.
79. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1986: 128–29.

Don't harm the Naga [or]
pimples will appear on your face.
If you harm the bear,
you will die.

It is not easy
to be Regent these days.
One needs a specialist of the Bönbo sect
and an egg of a Naga.

The billy goat has got sick.
The medicine for curing this
requires the bile from a bear
and the top-knot from a Naga.[80]

The allusions in the songs derive from the names of the main anti-regent officials. The first syllable of Bönshö's name is the same as that of Bönbo, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, the first syllable of Khyungram's name is the same as that of the mythical eagle or Garuda, the first syllable of Lukhang's name means Naga, and the first syllable of Dombo's name means Bear.

Another verse critical of Reting was hung as a poster on the walls of buildings around Lhasa. Known as *yiggyur,* these wall posters were an alternate type of public protest. This one sarcastically commented on the seemingly limitless rapacity of the regent:

The wolf living between the hills and the plain has a full [stomach].
The fox living between two rivers has his thirst quenched.
[But] the Regent who has eaten the mountain is not full [and]
even if he drinks the ocean his thirst will not be quenched.[81]

The poetic contrast here between the wolf and fox living in marginal areas but being able to satisfy their needs, and the regent having needs

80. In Tibetan: *khyung gi gshogs ba bcags song / dom gyi mkhris pa bton song / klu la gnod pa bskyal na / gdong la thor pa don yong. klu la gnod pa ma skyel / gdong la thor pa don yong / dom la gnod pa bskyal na / 'chi ba srong dang bral yong. deng sang rgyal po byed par / las su sla po mi 'dug / bon gyi mkhas pa dgos gis / klu yi sgong nga dgos gis. rwa pho snyung gzhi bzhes shag / de la phan pa'i sman la / dom gyi mkhris pa dgos gis / klu yi gtsug tor dgos gis.*

81. In Tibetan: *ri ma thang gi spyang ki brgyags nas 'dug / chu gnyis bar gyi wa mo ngoms nas 'dug / ri bo bzas nas ma 'grangs rgyal tshabs de / rgya mtsho btungs nas ngoms par mi 'gyur ro.*

that appear beyond satiation, conveyed the feelings of a large segment of the officials.[82]

In September 1940 the National Assembly again convened to specify the rewards for the regent and the others. This time there was no opposition to making Reting a substantial gift and he was presented with five estates, the Gonggar Throkar estate, the Longma estate near Gyantse, the Bhodong Tashigang estate near Shigatse, and the Treshong and Dogdzong estates in Nyemo, as well as the entire district of Namru Dzong. The other lamas and monk officials involved in the Dalai Lama's discovery also received estates and rewards: Ketsang Rimpoche received the estate of Rasa Gyakhen and the lucrative post of Nagchuka district commissioner for three years. He was also given the title of *dahen.* Khenrab Tenzin received the estate of Khudzin and the post of Hor district commissioner was given to his brother. Lobsang Tshewang, a junior monk official, received the estate of Senang, the post of Nyertsang (Lhasa municipal officer), and a house. Kheme, the lay official involved in the Dalai Lama's selection, received no estate but was promoted to the rank of dzasa and given a loan of 250 loads of brick tea and 900 loads of tea-pods free of interest for ten years.[83]

Reting's success in taming the lay officials led him to try similar tactics with the monastic segment, in particular with the Mey college of his own Sera monastery.

THE TÖBA ABBOT INCIDENT

Reting's staunch supporter during his period of power consolidation was the abbot of the Töba college in Sera. Although the head of this college carried the title *abbot,* it was in reality one of the anachronistic colleges that no longer had monks or property. Incumbency in this

82. A second wall-poster verse was composed by Gacan Demba himself and was a very clever plea asking the government to take his wealth but not his freedom or his right to live in Lhasa: *ka bzhi gdung brgyad pha khang ma dbang yang / lam zan sgug pa'i sprang po byas 'thus zhu / zhabs rten sa khang do dam gzhung bzhes kyang / sa 'dzin rgyang 'bud med pa thugs rje gzigs.* ("Even though I won't own my ancestral four-pillar, eight-beam house, please allow me to stay as a beggar by the side of the road. Even though you confiscate my government service estate, please don't exile me.") Of course, it had no effect.

83. IOR, L/PS/12/4165, report from British Mission in Lhasa for September 1940.

abbotship was usually seen as a stepping-stone in the monastic hierarchy; it was common for the Töba Abbot to be made the abbot of one of the real colleges when an opening occurred. Reting, however, wanted to reward his ally the Töba Abbot immediately. He decided to force the current abbot of Sera Mey college to resign, so that he could appoint the Töba Abbot in his place.

The incumbent Mey college abbot was a learned and pious elderly monk who was admired and respected by all the monks. He was also a Khamba, and very close to the Pandatsang family, both of whom came from Markham. Pandatsang, in turn, was a close supporter of Reting. Consequently, Reting asked Pandatsang to convey to the abbot that he wanted him to resign from his position at once. As with Langdün, the regent tried to sweeten the blow by offering the old abbot the title and rights of an ex-abbot (making him eligible to attend the government and monastic assemblies) and giving him the yield from the estate assigned as salary to the Mey Abbot for one more year. The old abbot, not wishing to disobey the regent, immediately agreed to resign. He knew, however, that the monks of Sera Mey were not fond of Reting, who was from Sera Che, their rival college, and he suspected that they would insist that he remain as abbot if he announced his intention to resign. He therefore requested to be allowed to resign without informing the monks. Reting agreed to this and the abbot submitted his written resignation.

The Sera Mey monks were first surprised and then incensed as they discovered what had transpired. When the order came from the government to submit a list of candidates for the position of abbot, the monks guessed (or were secretly told) that the reason behind the resignation was to allow Reting to appoint the Töba Abbot. They decided first to follow traditional rules and submitted to the regent a list of five outstanding candidates, but did not include the Töba Abbot among them. They also agreed internally to stage a mass walkout if the Töba Abbot was appointed. Usually only a ranked list of names was submitted, but the Mey college monks were so angry that they added a written note:

> The elimination of our good Abbot has made us very sad, but this is finished. We are not going to make any trouble about it. However, regarding the appointment of a new abbot, we have submitted the names of five first-rate candidates so please pick the new abbot from among

> these five. If this is not agreeable, we will send up other names to you. But there is one person whose name we will not send up—the Töba Abbot. He has a great wish to be abbot but he is not knowledgeable or scholarly and will not be a good abbot. He is good in politics, but is not good in religion. If you appoint him as abbot, then we will put away the rug on which the monks sit in the Prayer Hall and leave. To this all the monks have taken an oath.[84]

This defiance placed the regent in an extraordinarily difficult a humiliating position. If he appointed the Töba Abbot, as was his rig the monks had already sworn that they would not accept him; giv the volatility of monks, they might even try to kill him. If Reting th took action against these monks, there was no telling what kind of su port they would get from Drepung and Ganden monasteries.

Reting turned for assistance to the most famous lama of Sera M Phabongka. He was in the midst of giving religious teachings in Tas lhunpo, but the regent sent a special messenger traveling day and nig to ask him to return at once. In Lhasa, the regent explained the situ tion and asked Phabongka to persuade the monks to accept the Tö Abbot. Because most of them had taken teachings from him and we thus in a teacher-student relationship, Phabongka was confident th would listen to him.

Phabongka invited the more influential monks in Sera Mey to co to see him and enjoined them to obey the regent. The monks replie "You are our 'root' lama and whatever you say we will do. If you s die we will die. However, agreeing to accept the Töba Abbot we w never do." Phabongka in turn scolded them, "If you do not listen what your 'root' lama says you are very bad indeed." The Mey colle monks would not yield. They offered Phabongka a gift of money th symbolized their belief in him, but Phabongka, angry and frustrate threw the gift money back at them.[85] The monks still refused to a quiesce, saying that even if they, the higher monks, agreed to accept t Töba Abbot, the common monks would never agree.

Phabongka thus had to convey the monks' resolve to Reting, wl then tried to intimidate them. He ordered blacksmiths in Lhasa pu

84. Surkhang, interview.
85. Ibid.

licly to make many leg and hand shackles and to leak the rumor that these were for the Sera Mey monks who would be arrested by the government. After this display, Reting ordered the Mey college leadership to come to his office in Shöl, fully expecting that, fearing arrest, they would not come. If this ploy worked, he would have a more defensible issue to employ against them if he chose to use force.

But again he failed. The monk leaders first asked the common monks what they would do if the regent arrested or killed them. When they swore to sacrifice their lives if necessary in support of the leaders, the Sera Mey officials went, as ordered, to Shöl.

As though giving them a last chance, the regent asked the Mey college officials what they were going to do, implying that force might be used against them. The monks stood firm again, saying, "We have nothing to think about at all. If you want you can put us all in prison but we cannot yield. Even if we wanted to change now, the lower monks will not let it be."[86] Reting, though furious, now backed down, rather than risk a violent confrontation with Sera Mey, and appointed one of the five candidates originally submitted for the abbotship. He was not content to leave the matter there, however. He decided to punish the monks of Sera Mey by venting his anger on the old abbot. He expelled him from the monastery (on the grounds of having fomented discord), causing him to lose not only all his rights and income but also his home in the monastery. This further embittered the monks, who then humiliated the regent still more by spreading the word that the life of the Töba Abbot was not safe if he returned to the monastery, and he, unwilling to take such a risk, now had to resign.[87]

This succession of events—Langdün, Kheme, Tregang, Khyungram, and now Sera Mey—eroded support for Reting among the monastic and lay political elite and set the stage for his resignation.

THE RESIGNATION OF THE REGENT

On 26 December 1940, Reting returned to Lhasa from his visit to the monastery of Samye (see Figure 38). Soon afterward, rumors began



38.

Reting relaxing in Tsarong House shortly before his resignation as regent

to spread that he was planning to resign. In mid-January 1941, Reting called the Kashag to his office in the Potala Palace and officially notified them of his intention to resign, instructing them to inform the assembly at once. He told the shapes that he had experienced dreams that foretold that his life was in danger unless he resigned and went into retreat. Since he had threatened to resign in the past when he wanted something, this request must initially have seemed another political ploy to the shapes. The Kashag informed the assembly, which was by chance in session. Incredulous at the news, the delegates immediately asked the Kashag to request that Reting reconsider. When Kashag responded that they had already done this, all the members of the assembly went en masse to Reting to beseech him not to resign. Reting

took an oath, saying that he had to resign. He then advised them that he thought Taktra Rimpoche, an old lama who was acting as the junior tutor to the young Dalai Lama (the regent himself was supposed to be the senior tutor), would be the best choice as his successor (see Figure 39). Reting promised to speak to him personally if he refused.[88]

The assembly returned and discussed this suggestion. Taktra was a learned and highly respected lama in his sixties who had given teachings to Reting and who was the head of a very small and poor labrang located about fifteen miles southwest of Lhasa. He was a strict and taciturn person of high moral standards who had not been involved at all in politics. When the assembly went to tell him of Reting's wishes, Taktra at first demurred, saying, "I am very old and could not do such a thing."[89] But when the assembly leaders insisted that Reting wanted Taktra to be the new regent, he accepted. In a single day, the old regent had resigned and the new one was confirmed. As one former Tibetan official put it: *"It was done as simply as changing a village headman."*[90]

By the end of February 1941, on the first day of the first month of the Iron-Snake year, the elderly Taktra became regent of Tibet. Then began a series of disastrous events which saw Reting unsuccessfully try to assassinate Taktra in 1947 and, in turn, be himself assassinated in prison. The unexpected aftermath of the quick and uneventful change in rulers plunged Tibet into internal chaos at precisely the time when external dangers escalated and finally overwhelmed the polity.

Two questions require elucidation. Why did Reting resign at the height of his power? Why did he select the old and otherworldly Taktra Rimpoche as his successor? A number of explanations are possible. Some take the regent's comments at face value: he resigned because of a supernaturally revealed danger to his life. Reting's behavioral aberrations had been apparent to the monastic leadership, who speculated that they might have been due to the influence of some deities or that they might be a symptom of *chitey*, that is, signs of approaching death.[91] But this supernatural explanation seems highly unlikely. The regent could have taken any of a number of religious alternatives and still re-

88. Actually, Reting had already spoken to him. This is discussed later in the chapter.
89. Shakabpa, interview. He was in the room with the delegates and Taktra.
90. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
91. Dardo (Rimpoche), interview.



39.

Taktra (seated) (photo courtesy of U.S. National Archives)

tained his position as regent. He had only moderate day-to-day work relating to his position and could have devoted most of the day to prayer and contemplation while still holding the coveted position of regent of Tibet; or he could have gone into retreat for a few months, making the Kashag responsible for decisions or appointing an acting lönchen.

A second explanation holds that public criticism and opposition within the government and the monastic segment were increasing, due to Reting's economic misuse of power and his treatment of Langdün, Khyungram, Kheme, and the old Mey Abbot. Moreover, the scholar monks (*geshes*)[92] had begun to criticize his undisciplined behavior,[93] complaining that to become an abbot or attain the highest *geshe lharampa* rank one no longer had to study but just had to pay enough money to Reting Labrang.[94] But these explanations also seem insufficient to explain the regent's resignation. Despite verbal criticism, it would have been difficult to organize a movement against him. His earlier "miracles" of sticking a stake in a rock and tying shut the mouth of an overflowing clay pot were known to all, and belief in his powers was universal among the common people.

To understand Reting's resignation at the height of his power, one must turn to Reting's sexuality. Many in the monastic and government elites knew that Reting was not celibate. He is said to have had affairs with Namkye Tsedron, the wife of the lay official Cogtray, with Tseyang, his half-brother's wife, with whom he lived polyandrously (see Figure 40)[95] and also with one of Phünkang's daughters.[96]

92. *Geshe* is one of the highest scholastic degrees monks can earn.
93. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
94. Dardo (Rimpoche), interview.
95. Ibid.; Sambo (Rimshi), interview. Both of these women were from the Delerabten family. In a letter written after he had returned to Reting monastery, Reting asked Cogtray's wife to come to him. She replied that she would not leave her husband and live with Reting because it was not right (lit. in Tibetan: *rgyu 'bras la 'gro gi ma red*). "But," she wrote, "I'll see you in Lhasa" (Anon1, interview). In a letter to Nyungne Lama in Lhasa, replying to his advice that Reting flee to China at once, Reting wrote that it would be hard for him to flee to China at that time because *bu pad nam lo na phra bas byang thang du 'gro bskyod dka' ba* ("because son Padnam is so young it is difficult to go through the Northern Plain" [which was freezing in winter]) (Sambo [Rimshi], interview, confirmed by Lhalu, interview).
96. Dardo (Rimpoche), interview.



40.

Tseyang

In and of themselves, these affairs would not have been regarded as :y important: for incarnate lamas such behavior was easily accepted high-level Tantric *siddhi* activities that people of lower consciousness uld not understand. Another lama said that he explained all this to a zzled young monk as follows:

We human beings can see only the external appearance but cannot fathom the inner mind. . . I'm not defending Reting but basically if you judge by the external appearance only, then the Eighty Great Siddhas, much venerated by us all, were all like this in their lifetime. Especially those who have reached higher levels of Tantra, they do take such appearances. Most of these Siddhis were born in a lower strata. You must

> know this and analyze the truth. Reting Rimpoche has not changed. It is the same Reting Rimpoche who put a wooden-peg into the rock and it is the same Reting Rimpoche who tied the neck of the pot, and finally it is the same Reting Rimpoche who was recognized by the 13th Dalai Lama.[97]

The real problem lies in the fact that the Dalai Lama was scheduled to be ordained as a "novice" monk (*getsul*) and take thirty-six vows, including the vow of celibacy in early 1942, roughly one year hence. It was customary in Tibet for the senior tutor of the Dalai Lama (that is, the regent) to administer the vows. For Tibetans, this was certainly one of the regent's most important duties, and a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence. But the person who gives the vow to others not only has to have taken them himself but also must have adhered to them, especially the vow of celibacy. Tibetans view the transmission of the *getsul* vow as a continuous line across the centuries, from one who has taken the vows to the next. If the vows are given by someone who has broken the vows, then the vows he has given are meaningless, and the young monk in effect has taken no vows at all.

That this was the real problem faced by Reting did not go unnoticed in Lhasa, and in 1940, wall posters appeared both in Lhasa and at Drepung monastery: "It is important that the Abbot who will ordain the Dalai Lama has to be a person who observes the *vinaya* [monastic] rules properly and is pure without any question."[98]

It might appear that the regent might have circumvented this difficulty by instructing the junior tutor to perform the ordination or by taking leave for prayers at the time of the ordination. These alternatives were impossible, however, given the weight Tibetans placed on the

97. Ibid.

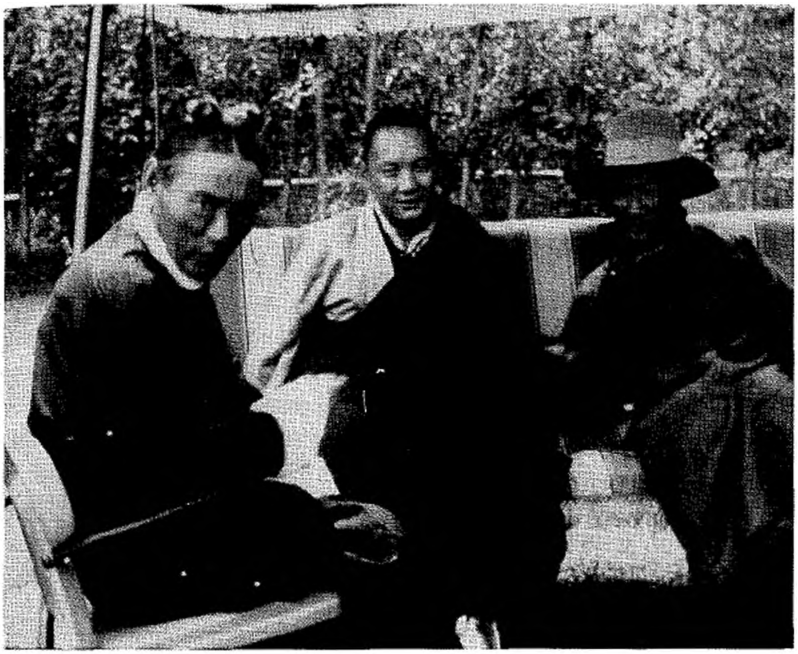
98. In Tibetan: *Rgyal dbang don gyi bdag po'i rab bzhes mkhan po de bzhin 'dul khrims gtsang ldan gleng med ci dgos gal che* (Khe smad [Kheme] 1982: 53). Ka shod (Kapshöba) (1985: 6) says the poster said, "It is not all right for Reting to give the Dalai Lama his religious vows because he has no vows" (*rwa sgreng la sdom pa med pas rgyal ba rin po cher chos lugs kyi bslab sdom 'bul bzhes sogs byas na mi 'grig*). He adds that in Lhasa much secret discussion took place about this and people were dubious, saying that there was only one year before the Dalai Lama's vow-taking ceremony, so if Reting did not resign then or avoid the ceremony later, there would be a major controversy that would have dire consequences for the religious-temporal political system.

pure transmission of the vows to the Dalai Lama. Sambo, a senior Tibetan official, explains: "Look, he is the Senior Teacher [and regent] and Taktra is only the Junior Teacher so how can the senior Teacher leave this and let the Junior Teacher take it over. That is not possible. Therefore, Reting either had to close his eyes and sit [silent] or else he had to leave [the position]."[99] The only way for Reting to avoid responsibility for the vows was to resign as senior tutor: to do this, he had to resign also as regent.

It might also appear that, given the Tibetan people's acceptance of noncelibacy for incarnate lamas, Reting could have admitted his loss of celibacy and been relieved of the duties of the *rabjun* ceremony only. But while Tibetans silently accepted such behavior on the part of incarnate lamas, open admission was another matter. Reting, a proud and vain man, apparently could not put himself on the level of a common farmer by admitting he needed sexual intercourse. Then, too, an open admission might be used by his enemies to oppose his continuing as regent.

Before he resigned, Reting called together his main advisors, Nyungne Lama (see Figure 41), Reting Dzasa, the ex-Reting Dzasa, Khardo Lama, and a household official named Ngawang Loden, to discuss the problem. Nyungne and Khardo advanced a brilliant scheme. They advised Reting to resign from the regency and return to his monastery for several years, ostensibly to undertake the religious prayers and meditation needed to remove a "danger" to his life. Then, after the "danger" was eliminated, he could return as regent. The Dalai Lama's initiation ceremony would be over, and all could return to normal. They also advised him that if he appointed one of the great incarnation lines such as Kundeling as his successor, it would later be hard to ask for the power back. But if he appointed an old and minor lama such as Taktra, such problems would be avoided. Not only was Taktra Reting's "root" lama, but he was old and uninterested in power and wealth. From all perspectives it appeared that he could be relied upon to return the regency sometime after the ceremony was completed. They also urged Reting to resign well in advance of the vow-ceremony so that the

99. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.



41.

(Left to right) Tsarong, Reting's half-brother Thubten Gyentsen, and Nyungne Lama (photo courtesy of Tsarong Rimshi)

linkage would not be obvious. Reting Dzasa and ex-Dzasa agreed, and this strategy prevailed.[100]

After this meeting, Reting individually summoned shapes Temba Jayan, Bönshö, and Phünkang, explaining to each of them the prophecies regarding his life and his decision to resign from both the regency and the senior-tutor role.[101] Kapshöba wrote that Reting also called

100. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 7–8. Kapshöba also states that the real reason was the "supernaturally" identified threat to his life; but this seems to be attributable to Kapshöba's wish to portray Reting in the most positive light because of the Chinese government's positive attitude toward Reting and their view that Taktra was a pro-British puppet.

101. Ibid.: 10.

him to his residence and explained the signs and prophecies that had led him to resign. Kapshöba says that he advised Reting not to resign but, rather, to take a temporary leave, appointing Taktra as acting regent while he returned to Reting to pray. Taktra would then handle the giving of monastic vows to the Dalai Lama and other political issues, but if an important matter arose he would consult with Reting. Reting replied that he did not think appointing an acting regent was appropriate. A few days later, Reting again called Kapshöba and told him that because Taktra would have to perform the Dalai Lama's vow ceremony, it was not suitable that he bear the designation of a mere acting regent.

Although most accounts say that Taktra was Reting's first choice, one report stated that Reting broached the subject with Phabongka Rimpoche before Taktra. Phabongka was famous for his view that lamas should not become involved in politics, and it may be that Reting also saw him as one who would not want to retain power. Phabongka's manager, the late Trinley Thargye, recounted the event:

> Reting sent a samdra slate-board note to Phabongka Rimpoche saying, "I would like to resign for awhile from the regentship . . . so would you like to take my place for awhile?" So then Phabongka asked me in a joking way saying that "Now Honorable [Gungö] Dzasa has come." And he told me he had received the samdra note and that if he becomes regent then I will come to be called [by the title] Honorable [Gungö] Dzasa. "So I'll call you that title now." He said this in a joking manner. Then he said [seriously], "What shall we do? Shall we be regent or not?" I told him to please let me think about this for tonight and give my suggestion tomorrow. This is so big that I can't say anything right now. Phabongka said that is fine and told the messenger to go back to Reting tonight and to come back tomorrow morning to collect the answer.
>
> That night I could not sleep all night. It was very exciting but one had to think what to do. To be a regent or to be a lama. If he becomes a regent he becomes very powerful and I myself will have great power. The labrang will also be big and as much as we want it can be built up. But in another way of thinking there is no place in Tibet, including Sendregasum, the government officials, various small monasteries and villages, where there is no Phabongka disciple. If he takes over as regent he will never be able to fulfill the wishes of these people. Then there will be a lot of mistrust between the teacher and the disciples and this will be bad.

> So the next morning I got up early and washed my face and took a scarf and *tensum* [a little money to represent the body, mind, and speech of the Buddha] and went to Rimpoche. I told him please excuse yourself from becoming the regent. It is not necessary for you to become a regent. Whatever you are now, this is good enough. I do not need a Dzasa title for myself [he was crying while he said this], we don't need anything. Please remain as you are. It is the best. . . If you become regent everything will be spoiled. In this country you will never be able to fulfill the wishes of the people, you will make enemies, and I will not be able to serve you. Everyone will be demanding higher status and power so in the end it will be horrible. This is what I think. So this is how we gave up the offer. I swear that this is what happened. [He was still crying.]
>
> When I first told Rimpoche, he told me, "How silly you are. When it came to the hand you have no heart to take it." So I thought he didn't like my ideas. So I told him that no matter how much I think that it is better that you should not become regent, the decision is up to you. Then later he was really happy for that suggestion and he told me, "You are really an honest person. Your way of thinking is right. If one cannot give up the worldly dharma, then you are not a true religious person. Some abbots of the monasteries cannot give up their abbotship, but you can give up the regency. If this is not important, then what is important?"[102]

If Trinley Thargye's account is accurate, then it was only after Phabongka refused that Reting turned to Taktra. However, a number of former officials doubt this possibility, because Reting and Phabongka did not get along very well, and it is difficult to believe that Reting would have turned over power to someone who was not a close associate.[103]

In any case, after Reting's resignation he and his entourage returned to Reting monastery several days north of Lhasa and did not return to Lhasa until December 1944, when their visit precipitated a civil war.

102. Trinley Thargye, interview. This is also mentioned in Phabongka's official biography (Ldam ma 1981).

103. Lhalu, interview.

10

CONCLUSION TO PART ONE: THE RETING YEARS

The seven-year period spanning the period from the death of t 13th Dalai Lama in December 1933 to the resignation of Reting Ri poche in early 1941 represents the first phase of the interregnum p riod. These years saw the vitality of the Tibetan government decl and its development lag. The state of the Tibetan military deteriorat the economic surpluses vanished, and the full grain-storage bins of t 1920s emptied. Led by the excesses and abuses of Reting and his brang officials, national and government interests took second place personal gain and aggrandizement.

This period also saw a number of critical turning points in mod Tibetan history. First and foremost was the destruction in 1934 Lungshar and his "Union for Happiness" reform party. Lungsha downfall eliminated the most forward-thinking and capable figure the government, and Tibet lost its best opportunity to overcome t entrenched religious conservatism that had been impeding realis change. Had Lungshar's scheme succeeded, it is not unlikely that t Tibetan government would have been able substantially to strength its military and international position, and there is reason to beli that the demise of the Lamaist State in 1951 might have been avoid But Lungshar's ideas, though moderate by Western standards, w considered radical in Tibet and threatened the vested interests of t elite. His defeat, his vicious mutilation by blinding, and the destructi of his family sent a clear message to others with liberal and progress ideas. The Lungshar "lesson" was reinforced by the treatment accord

the lay official Khyungram and his family. The forces that had destroyed the Tsarong faction in 1924–1925 had become even more dominant in this first period of the interregnum.

A second critical turning point was the monastic segment's insistence that an incarnate lama be selected as regent. This resulted in the selection of the young and inexperienced Reting in 1934. Acquisitive, fun-loving, and vindictive, Reting Labrang became one of the largest traders in Tibet and Reting came to dominate the government bureaucracy, eliminating officials who questioned him. With such a ruler at the helm, the strict standards of duty and propriety the 13th Dalai Lama had imposed on Tibet quickly fell by the wayside. Moreover, Reting's failure to maintain his vow of celibacy forced him to resign the regency rather than defile the presentation of vows to the young Dalai Lama. The resignation set the stage for a disastrous internal conflict six years later when Reting attempted to regain the regency. The attempted coup, a brief civil war, and the asassination of Reting was to leave Tibet hopelessly divided just at the time when it faced the threat of postwar China.

The interregnum government also faced several delicate and dangerous external situations. The Chinese were allowed in 1934 to establish a mission in Lhasa for the first time since they had been expelled by the 13th Dalai Lama in 1912, and the British followed suit in 1937. Tibet, moreover, was unable to secure British support for its claim of independence and could not reach any territorial or political settlement with China. Though Tibet continued to long for an amicable rapprochement with China regarding these issues, the two sides remained far apart on all issues.

During the first phase of the interregnum, however, Tibet did continue the policies of the 13th Dalai Lama and did maintain the de facto independent political system that had been established in 1912. The government prevented the Panchen Lama from returning to Tibet with a Chinese military force, and the 14th Dalai Lama was brought from Chinese territory and installed without any demonstrable increase in Chinese influence or presence in Tibet. These successes continued to fuel the convenient but ultimately disastrous belief among Tibet's conservative/monastic segment that Tibet would always be able to preserve her own political system without importing new and alien ideas and

institutions. Tibet entered the second phase of the interregnum period, the Taktra regime, without any compelling fears. However, Tibet's ability to block Chinese advances had in reality been due mainly to internal conditions in China. The Japanese invasion and the Communist threat combined to preoccupy the Nationalist government and to render it impossible for Chiang Kai-shek to contemplate military action in Tibet.

Tibet, with its glittering gilded roofs and religious altars, was racing toward a fatal collision with the modern world and China. This will be the subject of Part Two.

II

THE ERA OF TAKTRA AND THE 14TH DALAI LAMA, 1941–1951

11

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE TAKTRA REGENCY: 1941–1943

The sudden resignation of Reting and the enthronement of Taktra in 1941 reversed the moral decline of the later Reting years. The new regent, an elderly and learned incarnate lama who led an austere life, at once set out to restore the high level of discipline and morality that had characterized the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama. In glaring contrast to the commercial abuses and venality of Reting Labrang, Taktra at once publicly announced that his own labrang would not engage in trade or business.[1] Two incidents convey the ethical standards of the new regency.

TAKTRA'S NEW ETHICS

During Taktra's first year as regent, Dingja was appointed as one of two lay officials (*yarso*) who participated with 500 peasants in an annual ceremony in which they dressed in ancient military costumes and paraded in Lhasa during the New Year's festival. Because the cos-

1. Although Taktra did not mention Reting Labrang per se, the implicit comparison was not lost on Reting and his followers, who took this as an insult they had not expected from the person they had plucked from obscurity and elevated to the position of regent. This was related by the late Thubten Thuwang (interview), Sambo (Rimshi) (interview) and indirectly by Reting Dzasa (interview). In a sense, this event represents the beginning of the conflict between Reting and Taktra.

tumes and related expenses cost each official as much as 15,000 rupees,[2] Dingja tried to use his influence in the Tsigang to be released from participating.

Appointments to this ceremonial post were made on the basis of seniority, and the next official in line was Namseling. He had just arrived from a three-year tour of duty in Kham and would normally have been considered less able than Dingja to take on this unpopular responsibility. Nevertheless, the Tsigang approved Dingja's request and sent it on to the Kashag, which in turn sent it to the regent for routine approval. Taktra, however, saw this as precisely the kind of shirking of duty and personal favoritism that had become common during the Reting regency, and he reversed the decision. His action gave notice to officials that new standards were in effect and that they were expected to serve the government conscientiously.[3]

A second, more important and complicated incident reveals Taktra's willingness to act even where the new Dalai Lama's family was involved. The family of the young 14th Dalai Lama, in keeping with custom, expected to be ennobled and provided with financial security in the form of a house in Lhasa and one or more manorial estates with attached serfs. While these arrangements were being decided, the government provided temporary housing in Lhasa and paid all their expenses. The precise size, number, and quality of such estates varied; in April 1940, it became clear that the 14th Dalai Lama's father (known by the title of Yabshi Kung or Gyeyab) was not going to be easy to satisfy. When the government offered him two estates, one near Lhasa and one in Chayul in southern Tibet, and the house that had been confiscated from Khyungram in 1940, the Dalai Lama's father refused the Khyungram house, saying that he and his family would feel uncomfortable living in a house that had been confiscated so recently. The government then offered him the Photrang Sarba house that had been confiscated from Kumbela in 1934, but he refused this also. In the end, the government gave him a large park, Cangseshar, in Lhasa and provided

2. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 19 March 1944.

3. Shakabpa, interview.

the materials and labor for construction of a huge new house. The Yabshi Kung then informed the government that his family could not maintain themselves with the two estates he had been given and requested three additional ones. He somewhat gruffly reminded the government that before he and his family left Amdo for Lhasa, the Tibetan government promised to give them whatever they needed to live in Lhasa and now should fulfill this promise. The National Assembly discussed his complaint and reluctantly agreed, although many felt he was receiving an excessive amount.

All of this would not have become an issue except for the Yabshi Kung's disdain for the laws of the Tibetan government. The father, strong-willed and hot-tempered, refused to pay the usual taxes on his estates and started to requisition free transport and labor from other serfs without going through the government. He also interfered in government legal cases and disputes and began himself to judge cases and issues brought to him by individuals. Furthermore, he demanded unheard-of deference when traveling in Lhasa; for example, all mounted persons, regardless of rank, had to dismount and pay respects to him or risk being beaten by one of his servants. On one occasion, when a sick person en route to the British Mission for treatment did not dismount, the Yabshi Kung immediately confiscated the man's horse.[4]

On another occasion, in the autumn of 1942, when several farmers from Betsang village near Lhasa went to the Tsöna area in southeast Tibet to barter salt for rice, they were met at Jora by the headman of one of the Dalai Lama's father's estates, who wanted to buy salt. The Betsang villagers, suspecting that they would be forced to accept an unfavorable exchange rate, refused to do business with him. The headman complained to the Yabshi Kung in Lhasa, who summoned the Betsang headman and then imprisoned him.

Because Betsang village was an estate of Drepung monastery's Loseling college and under its protection, the Loseling Abbot went to the house where the headman was being held and personally released him, sending him to Drepung for safety. The abbot then called on the Yabshi

4. IOR, L/PS/12/4179, letter from Norbhu Döndup, assistant political officer in Sikkim (then in Lhasa) to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 2 January 1942.

Kung, told him what he had done, and asked him why the headman had been imprisoned. The father cursed the abbot and threatened to shoot him with his pistol. At this point, it is said, the abbot coolly invited him to shoot, but he did not do so. The abbot filed a complaint demanding that the Yigtsang Office examine the issue, and the Dalai Lama's father filed a countersuit with the Kashag.[5]

The abbots of the Three Seats were not accustomed to such insulting behavior from religious figures, let alone even as important a layman as the father of the Dalai Lama, and monastic public opinion was strongly behind the Loseling Abbot. Consequently, friends of the Yabshi Kung persuaded him to withdraw his case, at which point the abbot did likewise and the affair ended.

The behavior of the Dalai Lama's father continued to violate even the rather loose norms of Tibet, and Taktra stepped in and ordered the National Assembly to discuss this issue. In late November 1942 it recommended that the Tibetan government curb the Yabshi Kung's unlawful behavior; soon afterward, it specified that any servant of the Kung who abused his position and exacted tribute either in cash or in kind from Tibetan subjects should be arrested.[6] Taktra approved the decision and ordered a proclamation to that effect exhibited on the streets of Lhasa and in the various districts of Tibet. It said:

> Since the arrival of the father of the Dalai Lama the upper and lower treasuries (Tsi-chag and Lha-chag) [Tseja and Laja] of the Tibetan Government have spent more than a lakh of Dotse on him. This amount is exclusive of messing and clothing charges. Over and above this the Tibetan Government have bestowed on him estates capable of producing 20,000 bhos of grain per annum [1 bho = 15 seers, roughly 30 lbs.]. Despite the above, the Dalai Lama's father requisitions grass, grain, butter, salt, firewood and yak dung from poor dealers and does not pay the full cost of such articles. Moreover, he fines people heavily for minor offenses without any reference to the Tibetan Government. . . . Further, he has instructed his tenants [i.e., peasant serfs] not to obey the demands of the Tibetan Government for forced labor. Be it known to the public

5. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 30 August 1942.

6. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letters from the British Mission for the week ending 29 November 1942, and 20 December 1942.

> that henceforth the Dalai Lama's father has been ordered to behave himself in a manner similar to the other Yabshis [i.e., families of earlier Dalai Lamas]. If any of his servants commits an offense, and if the Kashag takes no steps to try the case against the Dalai Lama's father, then the National Assembly will straightaway judge the matter.
>
> The above proclamation has passed by the National Assembly and bears the seal of the Kashag.[7]

This unprecedented action illustrates the lengths to which Taktra was willing to go to reassert government propriety and eliminate favoritism and self-interest in these first years of his regency. The contrast between the last years of the Reting's reign and the initial years of Taktra's is striking; even supporters of Reting Rimpoche recall that they were at first somewhat ashamed to compare Reting's behavior with that of the high moral tenor established by Taktra.[8]

These actions also reveal that Taktra never had any intention of acting as a caretaker or puppet regent and showed no favoritism to Reting or his followers. Taktra's removal of his labrang from participation in trade clearly pointed at the excesses of Reting Labrang, and the limitations imposed on the Dalai Lama's father seemed to Reting to be an ungrateful attack on a family with whom he had become close.[9]

Taktra's hostility to Reting was displayed in early 1943, when Taktra had his first opportunity to appoint a new shape (see Figure 42). At this time, Langcunga, the one shape remaining from the time of the 13th Dalai Lama, was serving as the governor-general of Kham. Such terms of duty normally last three years, and Langcunga, having served this term, was eager to return to the comforts of Lhasa. However, despite repeated requests for a replacement, none was sent, as the other shapes did not want to take his place.[10] Irritated and frustrated, Lang-

7. A translation of the edict was included in IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 10 January 1943.

8. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. The new regent had also begun a series of major scholarly projects. He ordered all Tibetan manuscripts then available in Central Tibet to be collected, had new woodblocks carved, and published and distributed them. He also had all the available woodblocks in Central Tibet (in monasteries, homes, etc.) catalogued. For all these reasons, Taktra's accession to power was initially received favorably by the mass of government officials (Gelek [Rimpoche], interview).

9. Reting Dzasa, interview.

10. The three other shapes at the time were Phünkang, Bönshö, and Temba Jayan.



42.

The three shapes in 1943: (left to right) Temba Jayan, Bönshö, Phünkang (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

cunga returned from Kham to Lhasa in the spring of 1943 without having been relieved of duty. Taktra responded by demoting him to the rank of dzasa, thereby creating a vacancy in the Kashag.

The main competitors for the position of shape were Sambo Teiji, Ragashar, Surkhang Dzasa, Shasur, and Kapshöba. Surkhang Dzasa, co-head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau, made a serious move to obtain the position through his supporter, the monk-shape Temba Jayan. When Temba Jayan suggested Surkhang's name at a Kashag meeting, however, he was rebuffed by Phünkang, a Reting supporter and appointee, who openly asked Temba Jayan how they could even consider someone who smoked opium. This public insult infuriated the Surkhang family, which decided to make a major effort to obtain the posi-

tion for Surkhang Dzasa's son, Wangchen Gelek, even though at thirty-three, he was rather young to compete for a shape position.[11]

The Surkhang family succeeded partly through the strong support of Temba Jayan and a huge gift of gold they gave to the regent's manager,[12] but primarily because the Surkhang family disliked Reting because he had confiscated of one of their estates and they were, therefore, a certain source of support for Taktra vis-à-vis Reting. Wangchen Gelek was appointed shape in October 1943 (see Figure 43).

At about the same time, Tsipön Driyü, a Reting supporter, was demoted for making mistakes in accounting and was replaced by Shakabpa. This was a huge jump in rank for Shakabpa, who at the time was only a tsipa. The Shakabpa family had been a patron to Taktra before his regency and the family also carried grudges against Reting both because of his treatment of their close relative Trimön and because Reting had forced Shakabpa's uncle, Tregang, to resign from his position as monk shape in 1938. With these appointments, a major shift of personnel began in the upper levels of the government, with anti-Reting officials systematically replacing those who were pro-Reting.

A number of Lhasa street songs commented sarcastically on these appointments:

> The horn of the ox has been broken
> and a prayer flag has been erected on the corner.
> The old yak has been sent to the butcher and
> two layers have been put on the hat.[13]

The first syllable of the demoted minister's name (Lang-cunga) means "ox," and the first syllable in the name Surkhang literally means "corner"-house. The first syllable in Driyü, the demoted tsipön's name, means "female yak," and the first syllable in Shakabpa's name means "hat." The allusion to two layers can be interpreted in one of two ways:

11. FO371/46123, memo from the British trade agent at Yatung to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 15 June 1945.

12. Gifts (*gyabden*) to influence key figures in law cases and promotions were common in Tibet. In this instance, the size of the gift shocked the Lhasa elite. It was particularly welcomed by Taktra Labrang's manager, however, since his labrang was poor and Taktra refused to engage in trade or to take more estates from the government.

13. In Tibetan: *glang gi rwa co bcag song / zur la dar lcog btsugs song / 'bri rgan bshas la phab nas / zhwa la nyis rtseg brgyab song.*



43.

Surkhang Shape (ca. 1945) (photo courtesy of J. T. Surkhang)

either Shakabpa's having jumped several ranks at one time, or that two members of the Shakabpa family were promoted at this same time. Three other songs also comment on these appointments.

> Having kicked the yak,
> he put on a hat.

Having built a wall of 30,000,
he put a prayer flag by one side.

The luck of Langcunga is low
so he has been hit by a cannon shell.
Having built a wall of gold,
a flag was put up in the corner.

The horn of the yak has fallen off;
it is a sign of having caught the stupefying disease.
The two and three layered hat,
is not so appropriate.[14]

The final stanza comments on the inappropriateness of a minor official like Shakabpa rising up in status to Tsipön in one leap when there were other, more experienced officials senior to him.

Given these developments, one of the great conundrums of modern Tibetan history is the nature of the transfer of power between Reting and Taktra. Did Reting offer the Regency to Taktra with the clear written or verbal agreement that he would have to relinquish the position to Reting after a few years? Or did Reting simply assume that the elderly and other-worldly Taktra would willingly step down if asked? Or did Reting believe that Taktra would respect his "advice" and favor his followers, thus affording him the power of the regency with none of the responsibilities? The answer is not clear. Many of Reting's supporters today claim that the National Assembly gave Reting a document that said Reting could resign and Taktra would rule in his place *temporarily.*[15] Other officials from that era, however, unequivocally assert that there was no such formal document and that Reting resigned unconditionally.[16] The nature of Tibetan politics supports the latter view, for if Reting had possessed such a document his monastic supporters could have demanded that the assembly meet to discuss his return, but, as we

14. *'bri la rdog rgyag gzhus nas / zhwa la zhwa mo g.yogs song / khri gsum rtsig pa brtsigs nas / zur la dar lcog btsugs song. glang byung rlung rta dma' bas / me sgyogs 'thor mdel thebs song / gser gyi rtsig pa brtsigs nas / zur la dar lcog btsugs song. 'bri yi rwa co bud pa / bon nad phog pa'i 'phrul red / zhwa mo nyis brtsegs sum brtsegs / len po ran yang ma byung.*

15. Kapshöba, interview; Reting Dzasa, interview.

16. Shakabpa, interview; Lhalu, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Anon1, interview.

shall see, no such attempt was ever made.[17] However, this does not rule out the possibility that there was a *verbal* agreement of some sort.

In 1947, while a prisoner, Reting himself mentioned such an agreement. Pebola, his jailer, quotes him as saying: "Not only did Taktra and I have a good relationship as teacher and disciple, but, since Taktra Labrang was very poor, I resigned for awhile and turned over the regency to him to help his labrang economically. [However], we had a verbal agreement that he would return it to me after a few years had passed."[18] Considering Tibetan religious etiquette, it is unlikely that Reting could have overtly told the more elderly Taktra he planned to return as regent after a few years. At best, Reting might have hinted at a return at that time and only later interpreted this as an "agreement." It is possible, however, that a more explicit verbal agreement was reached by the managers of Reting and Taktra. What is certain is that Taktra's anti-Reting demeanor was completely unexpected and created a set of conditions that made Reting and his followers perceive regaining the regency as important for their well-being.

While Tibet was slowly being divided internally into pro-Taktra and pro-Reting forces, externally Tibet was once again becoming embroiled in a threatening confrontation with China.

PLANS FOR AN INDIA-CHINA ROADWAY VIA TIBET, 1941–1943

When the Japanese military machine severed China's traditional supply routes, Chiang Kai-shek needed to develop alternate routes from

17. Further evidence that there was no letter comes from Lha klu (Lhalu [1985: 5]), who says that shapes Bönshö and Temba Jayan were worried about their own position if the regency changed again and added a line to the document that specified that Taktra should remain regent until the young Dalai Lama took over. He also says that Reting signed this document without realizing what it said. It is obvious that this would not have been necessary or possible if Reting really had a written agreement from the assembly to return after three years. The actual assembly documents undoubtedly exist in the government archives in Lhasa, but these are not available to scholars. When they are, this issue will probably be resolved.

18. The Tibetan reads: *Stag brag dang nga gnyis bla slob kyi 'du shes yag po yod pa ma zad / stag brag bla brang skyo po yin stabs ngas stag brag la 'tsho skyong byed ched re zhig nga rang bod kyi rgyal tshab dgongs pa zhus te rgyal tshab gsar pa stag brag nas gnang rgyu dang / lo kha shas song mtshams rgyal tshab kyi las 'gan nga la phyir sprod gnang rgyu nang ma'i kha ldan byas pa yin* (in Shar rtse [Pebola] 1983: 115).

India to China. After preliminary discussions with the British ambassador in Chungking, Chiang issued orders in February 1941 to begin construction of a motorable highway from southwest Szechuan Province through Rima in southeast Tibet to the NEFA (Northeast Frontier Agency) border in what is now Arunachal Pradesh (see Maps 7 and 8). The British ambassador in China supported the Chinese action and "recommended that in this matter we should not allow outmoded political conceptions to stand in the way of progress," that is to say, that Britain and India should not let their support of Tibet's internal autonomy interfere with Chiang's plan.[19]

The Government of India opposed the road, arguing that construction, as a very long term project, would not substantially help the war effort and that if China were to build such a road without Tibetan consent (as it appeared willing to do), Tibet's position as a de facto independent buffer state closely linked to Britain and India would be damaged.[20]

The British Foreign Office agreed that the road was impractical, but also felt sympathy for China and sought to assist her struggle against the Japanese. The outbreak of World War II in Asia in December 1941 and the Japanese army's remarkable initial successes created in London and Delhi "a new urgency, not without a hint of panic in it, to conciliate Chinese opinion which had been shocked and alarmed by our [Britain's] collapse in the Far East."[21] A letter from the head of the British Foreign Office's Far Eastern Department reveals the importance London placed on preventing the fall of its ally, China:

> we hold the view that the collapse of China would prolong the war by removing a potential base for striking at Japan, by the extent to which it would relieve the strain on Japanese resources, by the adverse psychological effect it would have on all of us and by the encouragement which it would give to our enemies. For these reasons we share the anxiety . . . to help in maintaining Chinese resistance and we spend much time thinking how best this can be achieved.[22]

19. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 70. This source contains references to many telegrams and letters that are no longer available in the archives.
20. Ibid.
21. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 70.
22. U.S. Foreign Relations, China, 1942, letter from A. Clarke (head of Far East Department of the British Foreign Office) to the counsellor of the American Embassy in the United Kingdom, dated 7 August 1942.

Consequently, London did not reject the plan for new supply routes but informed China that Tibetan consent was necessary before they could cooperate in the project.[23]

While this was taking place, the Chinese representative in Lhasa informed the Tibetan government that Britain and China intended to build a road through Tibet to Assam and that a survey party had already left China to begin the project.[24] The Tibetan government had previously refused China and Britain permission to build roads or airfields. They saw Chiang's actions as yet another attempt by the Chinese to regain a foothold in their country. After securing the National Assembly's approval, the government ordered the border officials to turn back any Chinese survey parties they encountered in their districts; it is said that the Tibetans killed the head of one such party.[25]

In February 1942, Chiang Kai-shek visited India and convinced the Indian and British governments to construct a motor road outside Tibet from the Assam rail and river heads at Sadiya and Ledo through Fort Hertz, south to Myithyina in Burma, and then to Lungling in Yunnan Province (see Map 9). This was considered an immediate priority, due to the possibility that Rangoon would soon fall and necessitate an alternate route to move the U.S. lend-lease stores to China.[26] In this atmosphere of comradely cooperation, the Government of India unilaterally reopened the issue of shipping goods from India through Tibet to China. It sought, however, to alleviate Tibetan apprehensions by limiting the carriers to pack animals and the existing trade trails. In March 1942, Norbhu Döndup, the assistant political officer in Sikkim, was sent to Lhasa to try to persuade the Kashag that Tibet could best protect her own future interests by voluntarily helping Britain and China in their hour of need.[27] The Kashag wanted to show its friend-

23. Ibid.

24. This, of course, was untrue, as Britain had not agreed to the plan; on the contrary, it had informed China that Tibetan consent was needed.

25. USFR, 740.0011/3272, telegram from the U.S. chargé in China to the secretary of state, Washington, D.C., dated 25 May 1943; IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 71.

26. FO371/31636, report and sketch maps on possible road development in Assam, including references to other telegrams no longer available.

27. FO371/31636, telegram from the Government of India to the British Embassy in Chungking, dated 28 March 1942.

ship to India and Britain, but they did not want to set a dangerous precedent. They referred the matter to the National Assembly, which categorically stated that Tibet could not agree to the use of its soil for the purpose of transporting supplies to China. The Tibetan government also informed the British at this time that they wanted to remain neutral in the war.[28]

Meanwhile, the Chinese learned of the Indian overtures to Tibet and became increasingly impatient at what they considered the audacious intransigence of the Tibetans. This tension was exacerbated by the Tibetan government's creation of a new office to deal with foreign affairs.

THE TIBETAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUREAU

Before the creation of the Foreign Affairs Bureau, both the British Mission and the Chinese Mission in Lhasa dealt directly on all issues with the highest office of the Tibetan government, the Kashag. By 1942, the volume of foreign affairs had expanded considerably and the Kashag decided to resurrect the Foreign Affairs Bureau that had been established and utilized briefly during the 13th Dalai Lama's reign. In early July they notified the British, Nepalese, and Chinese representatives in Lhasa (in letters parallel to the British one cited below) that they would have to deal with a new office:

> At the suggestion of the National Assembly of Tibet and with the sanction of His Holiness the Regent of Tibet, it has been decided to open a new office to deal with Foreign affairs. Dzasa Surkhang Surpa and Ta Lama Kunchog Jungne (Yongon Dzasa) together with a few assistants [see Figure 44], have been appointed as Officers in charge of the said office, and the office will function with effect from the 23rd day of the 5th Tibetan month (corresponding to 6th July 1942). *In future all matters both big and small, between the British and Tibetan Governments should be discussed with this office.*[29]

28. L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 71.

29. FO371/31700, translation of Tibetan letter dated 6 July 1942, enclosed in a letter from F. Ludlow in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim (emphasis added). This office was called in Tibetan Phyi Rgyal Las Khungs.



44.

Tibet's first foreign secretaries: (left to right, seated) Surkhang Dzasa, Yunngün Talama, Ringang

The Government of India complied, believing that by discontinuing direct access to the Kashag, the status of the Tibetan government was enhanced and that day-to-day work would be facilitated, since the head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau would be far more readily available for consultation than the shapes.[30]

The Nepalese government, however, had special rights, deriving from the Nepal-Tibet Agreement of 1856, permitting them to deal with the Tibetan government through the Gorship Office, which was created solely for Nepalese disputes and affairs. They informed the Kashag that they would continue to use that office, and the Tibetan government accepted this.

China also demurred. It did not want to be included in the same

30. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 68.

category as other foreign countries such as Britain, since this would be a tacit admission that Tibet was independent of China. It ordered Dr. Kung, its official in Lhasa, to continue to deal solely with the Kashag. When he informed the Kashag of this decision, they told him they could not agree to this and could no longer have direct dealings with him. This produced an impasse wherein the Chinese government could not present matters to the Tibetan government via their Lhasa representative.[31]

The extent of this stalemate is reflected in an incident involving the delivery of a letter. A Chinese official in Kham sent a letter to Dr. Kung care of the Tibetan Kashag. The Kashag passed the letter on to the Foreign Affairs Bureau for delivery to Kung, but he refused to accept it from them and ultimately it was sent back to China unopened.[32]

Sino-Tibetan relations in Lhasa deteriorated further on 27 August 1942, when a Tibetan policeman stopped a Chinese Tibetan man from beating his wife in the middle of one of the streets in Lhasa. The man assaulted the policeman and was arrested, tried by the Lhasa magistrate, and sentenced to 100 lashes. Kung demanded the release of the man on the grounds that as a half-Chinese he was under Chinese jurisdiction. The Tibetan government refused, reminding Kung that at the time of the expulsion of Chinese from Tibet in 1912–1913, all half-Chinese Tibetans had been given the choice of returning to China or staying in Tibet, and that those who decided to remain in Tibet had been informed that they would fall completely under the authority of the Tibetan government. Consequently, the Tibetan authorities carried out the lashing. Kung was so angry he ordered a photograph taken of the man's bloody buttocks and sent it to Chungking.[33]

Sino-Tibetan relations plunged even further on 6 October of that year, when another half-Chinese Tibetan became involved in a serious brawl with a half-Nepalese Tibetan. Four Tibetan policemen intervened

31. FO371/31700, remarks of Surkhang Dzasa to F. Ludlow, Lhasa letter for the week ending 24 August 1942.

32. FO371/31700, comments of Ringang to F. Ludlow, Lhasa letter for the week ending 30 August 1942. The Chinese circumvented the problem first by conducting most of their business via telegram from Chungking to the Kashag, and later by contacting the Foreign Affairs Bureau quietly through the Tibet government's liaison officer to their Mission, and by "informally" visiting the shapes in their homes.

33. Ibid.

but the half-Chinese man fled to the quarters of the Chinese Missior where he sought refuge as a Chinese national. The Tibetan police pui sued him into the mission and Kung, furious, seized the Tibetan polic men. When other police congregated outside the mission, Kung wer to see the regent even though it was late in the evening. The doors t Norbulinga Palace were locked, and, once they had been locked, Tibet ans consider it unthinkable for anyone to knock on the doors to gai entrance. Kung either did not realize this or did not care, for he starte banging loudly, shouting that he demanded to see the regent. Kun was merely told to come back the next morning,[34] but the shocke Tibetans considered it an unforgivable expression of disrespect to th regent and the Dalai Lama. The next day the Kashag withdrew thei liaison officer and convened the National Assembly,[35] which decided t punish Kung by ceasing to provide the Chinese Mission with fuel an servants and by demanding that the Chinese government recall Kung. A letter written by a subordinate officer in the Chinese Mission in Lhasa in late October 1942 reflects Kung's loss of position ana th isolation of the Chinese:

> Since the formation of a Foreign Office in Tibet, the situation has been suddenly changed. In August, two Chinese were arrested, and on Octo-ber 6th Tibetan police raided the [Chinese] Office as well as making arrests. The situation still remains the same, and is of great concern to everybody. The relationship between China and Tibet now remains as was before [i.e., bad]. Ching [Kung, the head of the mission] has lost his standing, and cannot be expected to extend his work.
>
> I came here to settle the frontier area at the time of national recon-struction and also to strengthen the relations between all races living in Chinese territory. Now the conditions are such that I am really a prisoner

34. FO371/35754, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 1 October 1942. All former Tibetan officials interviewed about this agreed that the British report was accurate.

35. IOR, L/PS/12/4182, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week endin 20 October 1942. The Tibetan government was so furious that they dismissed the liaiso officer (the monk official Samcor) from his position and fined him 3 gold coins for reporting the police incident and for failing to prevent Kung from going to Norbuling despite the fact that he had been at home, not on duty, that evening.

36. Anon1, interview.

in Lhasa. I would like to get back home to see my mother and to obtain another post in our national government.[37]

CHINA AND TIBET MOVE TO THE BRINK OF WAR

The deteriorating military situation in China and Southeast Asia was heightened by the warning, from the British ambassador in China to London, that China might take independent action against Tibet if Tibet did not agree to the transport of goods. Fearing that such action might lead to the reestablishment of a strong Chinese presence in Tibet, the British decided to increase the pressure on Tibet to compromise. Britain attempted to make Tibetan acquiescence more palatable by trying to wrest a public statement from China that it would respect Tibet's autonomy.[38] The British informed China that "they were prepared, in association with the Chinese, to speak plainly to Tibet and to threaten economic sanctions in order to change the Tibetan attitude, but [His Majesty's Government] feels that prior thereto the Chinese Government should do its part to facilitate Tibetan acquiescence, as Tibetan reluctance is believed to be largely due to fear of Chinese penetration." If China made such a "declaration," Britain said it would be ready to cooperate with them to exercise joint pressure on Tibet.[39]

However, the Government of India did not wait for a Chinese statement but instructed F. Ludlow, the head of the Lhasa Mission, to use both the threat of sanctions and the ties of friendship to impress on the Tibetans the seriousness of the matter. Ludlow then informed the Tibetan government that if they refused to allow the transit of goods, Britain might withdraw its acceptance of Tibet's "autonomy," or it might be necessary to stop the export to Tibet of brick tea from China or block the export of Tibetan wool to or through India.[40] Soon after

37. IOR, L/PS/12/4182, letter from Tai Hsin-chih (Lhasa) to Tsao Hsiang-leng (Chungking), intercepted and copied by the British.
38. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 72.
39. U.S. Foreign Relations, China, 1942, 893.24, 1377.5, cited in telegram from the secretary of state (C. Hull) to the U.S. ambassador in China, dated 3 July 1942.
40. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 72.

this, in July 1942, the Tibetan government backed down to the extent of agreeing to permit the transport of *nonmilitary* goods to China for one year, with the term *nonmilitary* not to be interpreted strictly; petrol, for example, was included among the nonmilitary supplies.[41] These supplies were to be sent through Tibetan trading companies on existing pack-animal trails via Central Tibet, Nagchuka, and Jyekundo, bypassing Lhasa. So sensitive was this issue in Tibet that the Kashag asked Taktra to sign the agreement without referring the matter to the National Assembly, which, it feared, would refuse.[42]

In the meantime, China did not issue the statement Britain had requested regarding Tibetan autonomy, so London asked the United States for assistance. The Department of State declined to get involved:

> For its part, the Government of the United States has borne in mind the fact that the Chinese Government has long claimed suzerainty over Tibet and that the Chinese constitution lists Tibet among areas constituting the territory of the Republic of China. This Government has at no time raised a question regarding either of these claims. The Government of the United States does not believe that a useful purpose would be served by opening at this time a detailed discussion of the status of Tibet.[43]

Now that Tibet had capitulated before British threats of sanctions, China informed the British that they were unable to make a public declaration with respect to Tibet's status. However, privately they stated that although Tibet was considered a part of the Republic of China, China had no intention of interfering with the autonomy of the internal administration in Tibet.[44]

Attempts to put this compromise into effect very quickly ran into

41. Some materials indicate that the Tibetans agreed to this in June (FO371/35758), but a letter from the Tibetan government mentions 29 July 1942 as the date. Actually, Tibet was fortunate in obtaining these terms since F. Ludlow was not authorized to agree to the prohibition on military goods. (IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 73.)

42. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 72; USFR, 893.24/1386, telegram from the British ambassador in China to the secretary of state, Washington, D.C. dated 13 July 1942.

43. FO371/35756, aide-mémoire sent by the U.S. Department of State to the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., dated 15 May 1943.

44. USFR, 893.24/1386, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in China to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 13 July 1942. The U.S. ambassador in Chungking was verbally informed of this by Foo Ping-sheung, the vice-minister for foreign affairs.

snags. China agreed to use existing pack-animal trails, but notified the British ambassador in Chungking that they planned to station Chinese "technicians" along the route to facilitate transport. The British knew that the Tibetan government was firmly committed to preventing any Chinese officials from entering Tibet to administer trade and therefore showed their disapproval to the Chinese by asking the Tibetan government their opinion of the intentions of the Chinese. The Tibetans refused to consider the Chinese plan; this was just the kind of development they had anticipated when discussion of a roadway began. The Tibetans informed the British that they wanted the final transportation arrangement embodied in a tripartite agreement wherein Britain would guarantee faithful adherence to its terms.[45]

In August 1942, the Chinese government raised a new obstacle by indicating that a representative of the Chinese Ministry of Communications would negotiate contracts directly with Tibetan transport firms.[46] The British agreed to this and in November informed Tibet of the proposed arrangement:

> The Government of India's purpose has throughout been to arrange for the establishment of a supply route for the benefit of their ally the Government of Free China in their resistance against the Japanese. Apart from this they had no direct object. They undertook certain discussions with the Tibetan Government in the course of which the latter laid down terms and conditions on which they would agree to supplies being passed through Tibet to China. The Government of India accepted the conditions on which Tibetan assent was given and now that it has been proposed that direct negotiations should be undertaken between representatives of the Stage Transport Administration of the Chinese Ministry of Communications and the Tibetan carrying firms, the Government of India have it in their mind to confine themselves to using their good offices with a view to facilitating such an agreement within the terms laid down by the Tibetan Government.[47]

The Tibetan government responded by forbidding Tibetan firms to accept such offers without their approval. Consequently, when the Chi-

45. FO371/35756, British aide-mémoire to the United States, dated 15 May 1943.
46. USFR, 893.24/1428, copy of telegram from the British Foreign Office, dated 15 August 1942, passed on by the British Embassy to the U.S. Department of State.
47. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 73.

nese officers contacted Tibetan transport firms in Kalimpong, India, none would accept a Chinese contract. The Chinese government approached the Tibetan government about this in late January 1943 and were told that no permission would be granted for shipments through Tibet unless a tripartite agreement with Britain was signed.[48] In March 1943, almost nine months after Tibet had agreed to permit nonmilitary traffic to be carried by private firms, no such tripartite agreement had been reached. The Tibetan government then took the rather rash step of ordering private Tibetan trading firms to stop the shipment of *all* goods to China until a final tripartite settlement was reached.[49] The Tibetan firms again complied, and Tibetan trade with China ceased.

These actions infuriated Chiang Kai-shek and in April he ordered the governors of Tsinghai, Sikang, and Yunnan to move troops toward the Tibetan border. Tibet was fortunate in that Chiang and his Kuomintang government had little control over the semi-independent border governors, two of whom, Liu Wenhui in Sikang and Lung yun in Yunnan, ignored the order for fear of weakening their own positions. Ma Pu-feng in Tsinghai, however, told Chiang he would take action against Tibet if Chiang would provide him with arms and ammunition. Chiang readily sent him fourteen truckloads of munitions, and Ma moved a few thousand troops first to Jyekundo (see Map 4) and then nearer Tibet.[50]

The Tibetans immediately sent troops to Nagchuka and recruited new militia. Although intent on confronting the Chinese if they advanced, the Tibetan government was frightened by the thought of war with China and turned to their only foreign supporter, British India, sending the following appeal:

> Last year, MAPUFANG, Chairman of KOKO NOR Province, SANING [Sining], in direct and willful violation of Treaties between Tibet and Saning, sent hundreds of troops, to DZAMAR near NAKCHU right into Tibetan territory.

48. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, minute from H. Rumbold to the secretary of state for India, dated 27 April 1943.

49. FO371/35756, telegram from F. Ludlow in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim (Gould), dated 7 April 1943; IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 73; FO371/35756, telegram from the British Ambassador in China to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 3 April 1943; Shakabpa, interview.

50. FO371/35755, telegram from the British ambassador in Chungking to the Foreign Office, dated 8 May 1943.

> This year it is reported that with the most aggressive intentions, many troops have already arrived on Tibetan border and that others are on the way. Naturally the Tibetan Government can no longer remain passive and must think of best ways and means to preserve the integrity of our sovereignty. Please ask our great ally, the British Government, through the Government of India to render us every assistance possible to uphold and maintain our independence and also ask Major G. SHERRIFF, Additional Assistant to Political Officer in Sikkim, to follow up this matter.[51]

The Tibetans also took steps to relieve the tension by ending their trade embargo, although they categorically refused to allow any Chinese to accompany the goods without permission from the Tibetan government. They sent a letter to the British, setting out their conditions:

> With reference to the transit of goods through Tibet to China, a joint petition has been received from Chinese traders resident at KALIMPONG asking for orders to be issued to Tibetan Trade Agent Yatung, to allow their goods to pass through *en route* to China, as these are purely and solely merchandise such as cotton goods and yarn, etc., for trading purposes and that they are willing to give a guarantee to this effect if necessary.
>
> In accordance with sanction accorded by Tibetan Government after strong representations by Government of India as per our letter of July 29th 1942, we have given orders to the Tibetan Government's Trade Agent Yatung and informed the Chinese Resident at KALIMPONG that goods may enter Tibet provided there are *no military stores or that no persons of foreign nationality endeavor to obtain admission into Tibet with the goods*. So please ask the Government of India, through Foreign Office Delhi and Political Officer in Sikkim *to see that no Chinese, without first obtaining permission of Tibetan Government, or military stores of any kind cross the Tibetan border*, and ask Major G. SHERRIFF, Additional Assistant to Political Officer in Sikkim to follow up this matter.[52]

51. FO371/35756, telegram from G. Sherriff, British Mission in Lhasa, to B. Gould, political officer in Sikkim, dated 15 April 1943.

52. FO371/35756, telegram from G. Sherriff, British Mission in Lhasa, to B. Gould, political officer in Sikkim, dated 15 April 1943 (emphasis added). The British and India governments honored Tibet's conditions regarding the entrance of Chinese officials into Tibet. For example, in June 1943, when one Chinese trader wanted to send two employees with his goods to Tibet, Delhi responded, "Please inform applicant that you have no authority to authorise any person of any nationality to proceed to Lhasa . . .

The British responded to Tibet's request for assistance by pressuring the Chinese to give assurances that they were not planning to attack Tibet and by informing the United States that American weapons sent to China through India could not be used against Tibet. They also asked the U.S. State Department to urge China to abandon what the British called "this unproductive policy" and concentrate on fighting the Japanese. In the meantime, the Chinese government unofficially denied having any plans to attack Tibet. For example, at a Pacific Council Meeting in Washington on 20 May, the Chinese foreign minister, T. V. Soong, informed Winston Churchill that although Tibet was a part of China, there were no plans to go to war with Tibet.[53] Similarly, in July, the Chinese acting foreign minister verbally assured the British ambassador in China that Chinese troops would not be used against Tibet.[54] The British had to be content with these informal and private reassurances, since the Chinese would not make any official statement that questioned their contention that Tibet was a part of China and saw all assurances that they would not invade Tibet as contradictory to their position that Tibet was already a part of China.[55]

Incredibly, the Chinese tried to shift the focus of attention by informing the British of reports of Tibet's aggressive intentions toward China and of unconfirmed rumors that the Japanese were sending munitions to Tibet and were preparing airfields in Kham for Japanese aircraft. The British responded by formally asking Tibet to give assurances regarding their intentions toward China. Tibet dutifully replied that it did not have any aggressive intentions against China or any "dealings or understandings with other foreign powers" such as Japan.[56]

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unless applicant can show that he has prior consent of Tibetan Government." (FO371/35757, telegram from B. Gould, political officer in Sikkim, to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 3 June 1943; FO371/35757, telegram from the Government of India, New Delhi, to B. Gould, political officer in Sikkim, dated 3 June 1943.)

53. USFR, 893.00/64, memorandum of conversation by J. Ballantine (Far Eastern Affairs, State Department), dated 31 May 1943.

54. FO371/35757, telegram from the British Foreign Office to the British Embassy in China, dated 21 July 1943.

55. The United States was also given assurances: for example, the Chinese vice-foreign minister told the Americans that, whatever the nature of the troop movements, "in any case we will do nothing." (USFR, 740.0011/3465, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in China to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 28 September 1943.)

56. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 74; FO371/35839, telegram

THE FIRST MISSION TO TIBET FROM THE UNITED STATES

The possibility of constructing a motorable road through Tibet to China prompted the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) to propose sending intelligence officers to Tibet to survey the terrain secretly. The U.S. State Department did not like the OSS initiative, but a plan for two officers to travel from Lhasa to China to join General Stillwell was approved in the summer of 1942.

The U.S. government initially asked the Chinese government to arrange for this visit, and in June 1942 the Chinese representative in Lhasa requested permission for two unnamed Americans to pass through Tibet to China. The Tibetan government flatly refused. The OSS then asked the U.S. ambassador in India to request the Government of India to approach the Tibetan government to permit two emissaries to bring a letter and gifts from President Roosevelt to Lhasa. The Americans did not mention their previous attempt through the Chinese, nor did they inform the British that the two officers really wanted to travel from Lhasa to China.[57] And although the State Department implied that this was an official request to the Tibetan government, the following note from Secretary of State Hull to President Roosevelt indicates that this was not the case:

> Colonel William J. Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services, is sending two members of his organization on a special and confidential mission to China via India and Tibet. It is believed that the work of the mission in Tibet would be greatly facilitated if you were to provide it with a letter of introduction to the Dalai Lama of Tibet. ***The letter is addressed to the Dalai Lama in his capacity of religious leader of Tibet, rather than in his capacity of secular leader of Tibet, thus avoiding giving any possible***

from the British ambassador in China to the Government of India, dated 22 April 1943; FO371/35755, letter from the Tibetan government to the Government of India, cited in a telegram from the Government of India to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 17 May 1943.

57. FO371/35759, British Foreign Office draft memorandum, dated 20 October 1943.

> *offense to the Chinese Government which includes Tibet in the territory of the Republic of China.*[58]

After being assured by the head of the British Mission in Lhasa that this was a genuine mission which could benefit Tibet and that the two Americans would return via India, the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau extended an invitation to the Americans.[59] On 12 December 1942, Captain Ilia Tolstoy and Lieutenant Brooke Dolan entered Lhasa, bringing Roosevelt's letter and some gifts which the British snidely assessed as being far too inexpensive to impress the Tibetans (see Figures 45 and 46). Roosevelt's letter to the Dalai Lama said:

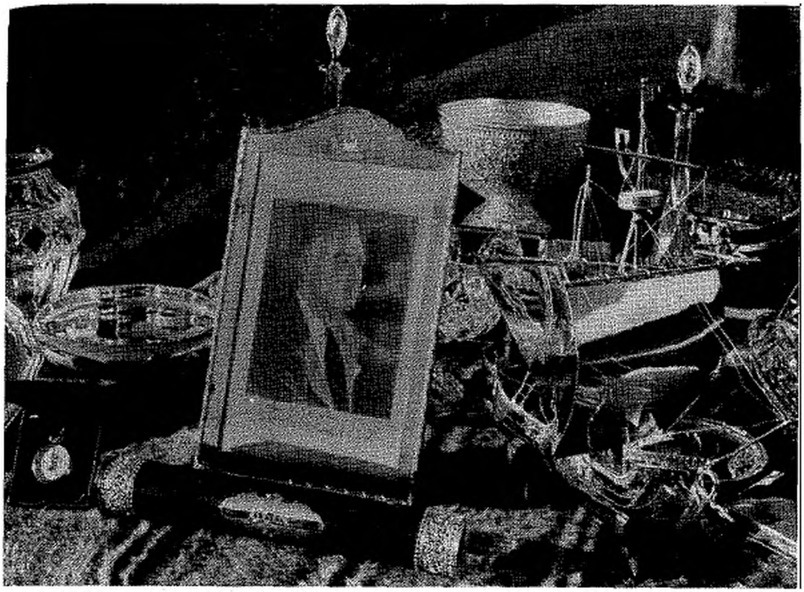
> Washington, July 3, 1942.
>
> Your HOLINESS: Two of my fellow countrymen, Ilia Tolstoy and Brooke Dolan, hope to visit your Pontificate and the historic and widely famed city of Lhasa. There are in the United States of America many persons, among them myself, who, long and greatly interested in your land and people, would highly value such an opportunity.
>
> As you know, the people of the United States, in association with those of twenty-seven other countries, are now engaged in a war which has been thrust upon the world by nations bent on conquest who are intent on destroying freedom of thought, of religion, and of action everywhere. The United Nations are fighting today in defense of and for preservation of freedom, confident that we shall be victorious because our cause is just, our capacity is adequate, and our determination is unshakable.
>
> I am asking Ilia Tolstoy and Brooke Dolan to convey to you a little gift in token of my friendly sentiment toward you.
>
> With cordial greetings [etc.]
> Franklin D. Roosevelt[60]

The Americans were well received in Lhasa but faced a difficult task in securing permission to travel to China via Nagchuka and Jyekundo. The logical source of support, the British Mission of Lhasa, could not

58. U.S. Foreign Relations, China, 1942, 103.91802/687, letter from the U.S. secretary of state to President Roosevelt, dated 3 July 1942 (emphasis added).

59. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, minute dated 11 February 1943; FO371/31700, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 24 August 1942.

60. U.S. Foreign Relations, China, 1942, 103.91802/687, Letter from President Roosevelt to Dalai Lama, dated 3 July 1942.



45.

Gifts sent by President Roosevelt via Capt. Ilia Tolstoy (1943) (photo courtesy of U.S. National Archives)

assist the Americans since they had assured the Tibetans that the Americans would return via India. Tolstoy, however, quickly won the approval of the Tibetan government by showing great sympathy with Tibetan views. Learning of Tibet's interest in obtaining communications facilities, he offered to help the Tibetans obtain wireless equipment from the United States and promised to seek help for Tibet in the manufacture of a Tibetan typewriter. Tolstoy made his greatest impact when he stated that he was recommending to his government that Tibet be represented at the Peace Conference at the end of the war. This represented a new mechanism for altering the status quo with regard to Tibet's international status. Tolstoy's suggestion, coupled with his statement that the U.S. government was in full sympathy with weak and small countries that wished to retain their independence, excited the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau and the Kashag, who felt that with



46.

(Left to right) unknown, Derge Sey, Reting, and Ilia Tolstoy (1943)

United States support for their cause, a postwar conference could simply declare that Tibet was independent. F. Ludlow, the head of the British Mission in Lhasa, furthered their hopes by indicating that his views "were very similar to Tolstoy's and if the Tibetan Government desired that their case should be represented at the Conference, I would do all in my power to help."[61]

61. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 20 February 1943; IOR, L/PS/12/4229, memorandum from F. Ludlow to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 4 April 1943.

Tolstoy's suggestion was sent by the Kashag to the regent to elicit his views, and on 12 March the Foreign Affairs Bureau called Ludlow, Tolstoy, and Dolan for a meeting. Ludlow's report of this meeting is revealing:

> Surkhang [Foreign Secretary] said that both the Regent and the Kashag had carefully considered Tolstoy's suggestion. They thought it a very excellent one and were most anxious that Tibet should be represented at the Conference. They expressed a hope that the Tibetan Government would be informed in due course, and in good time, of the date of the Conference, and the manner in which application for representation should be made. Meanwhile they trusted that the greatest secrecy would be observed, otherwise Chunking might forestall events by taking drastic action before the Conference assembled.
>
> 3. Surkhang then went on to explain to Tolstoy and Dolan that Tibet owed her present independence entirely to Great Britain. He added that what the Tibetan Government wished to see was America backing up Great Britain in her effort to maintain Tibet's independence. The Tibetan Government trusted this help would be forthcoming. He went on to say that the Tibetan Government had always placed implicit trust in Britain's good faith and had never found this trust misplaced.
>
> 4. Surkhang went on to give a history to [*sic*] Tibet's relations with China, emphasizing that Tibet had never recognised China's suzerainty, and that Chinese domination in the past had been purely military.[62]

The Tibetan government's enthusiasm appears to have made Tolstoy a bit nervous, and he commented to Ludlow after the meeting that "he was really very doubtful if his Government would approve his action and thought it quite likely that they would decide not to interfere in Sino-Tibetan affairs."[63]

But Tolstoy had achieved his aim; the Tibetan government reversed its position and granted him and Dolan travel permission, saying, "This is the first time that friendly relations have been established between Tibet and the U.S.A., and Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt has sent a letter

62. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 14 March 1943.

63. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, memorandum from F. Ludlow to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 4 April 1943. For Tolstoy, apparently, this was partly a ploy to secure permission to travel to China via Jyekundo.

and presents to the Dalai Lama. For the above reasons, the Tibetan Government allows you to go through [to China]."[64]

Tolstoy's doubts about the propriety of encouraging the Tibetans to think about a postwar conference were small compared to the reaction of the British in Delhi and London. While Basil Gould, the political officer in Sikkim, cautiously commented that there were points both for and against encouraging Tibet in this course and asking rhetorically whether anything might be gained if Tibet were to declare adherence to the Allied cause in the war, the viceroy of India, furious with Ludlow for indicating his personal support for Tolstoy's idea,[65] wrote a blistering comment to the Secretary of State for India in London:

> I regard with apprehension amateur efforts of two Americans who have recently been in Lhasa. Indications indeed are that they are impressed with Tibetan claim for autonomy, but suggestion that Tibet should be represented at Peace Conference seems to me strangely inept. . . Nor am I impressed by suggestions recently received from Gould and Richardson that Tibet should be prompted to follow up contact made through these representatives of President of U.S.A. and send letter impressing on American Government their theory of independence. American enlightenment in matters Tibetan may come in due course, but I would judge it unsound that we from here should attempt to hasten process.[66]

Ludlow was instructed to inform the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau that the Government of India could not associate itself with the Tolstoy proposal and that Ludlow's opinions were strictly his own. Moreover, "the advice of the Government of India was that they [Tibet] should not raise the matter themselves."[67] The External Affairs Department further instructed Gould that the Government of India did not wish Tibet to declare adherence to the Allied cause, as this "would inevitably

64. U.S. Foreign Relations, China, 1943, 893.00 Tibet/77, Tibetan Foreign Office to I. Tolstoy and B. Dolan, dated thirteenth day of first month, Water-Sheep year (February 1943).

65. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, letter from B. Gould to the Government of India, Department of External Affairs, Delhi, dated 15 April 1943.

66. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, telegram, dated 3 May 1943.

67. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, memorandum from the British Mission in Lhasa to the Government of India, Department of External Affairs, Delhi, dated 30 May 1943.

evoke prompt reaction in Chungking."[68] This prompted R. Peel in the India Office in London to say, "I hope that the Tibetans' childlike trust in Britain's good faith will not prove to be misplaced—but I do not feel too much confidence."[69]

When the Tibetans were informed of the British position they tactfully responded to the British representative in Lhasa: "If the Government of India did not think they should apply for representation at the Peace Conference they would certainly not do so. The Foreign Office stated that they had relied on the British Government to help them to maintain their independence and likened the two Governments to Father and Son."[70] The British official added that he felt the sentiment was quite genuine.

THE BRITISH REVIEW THEIR POSITION ON TIBET

The most recent official statement Britain had made on Tibet's political status was the 26 August 1921 memorandum given by Lord Curzon to Dr. Wellington Koo, the Chinese minister in London. The relevant passage in this memorandum reads:

> In view of the commitments of His Majesty's Government to the Tibetan Government arising out of the tripartite negotiations of 1914, and in view of the fact that the Chinese Government accepted, with the exception of the boundary clause, the draft convention of 1914, providing for Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty, and formally reaffirmed their attitude in this respect in their offer of 1919, His Majesty's Government do not feel justified, failing a resumption of the negotiations in the immediate future, *in withholding any longer their recognition of the status of Tibet as an autonomous State under the suzerainty of China, and intend dealing on this basis with Tibet in the future.*[71]

68. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, letter from H. Weightman, External Affairs Department, New Delhi, to B. Gould, political officer in Sikkim, dated 6 May 1943.
69. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, note by R. Peel, dated 13 May 1943.
70. IOR, L/PS/12/4229, memorandum from the British Mission in Lhasa to the Government of India, External Affairs Department, Delhi, dated 30 May 1943.
71. FO371/35755, minute on "Tibet and the Question of Chinese Suzerainty," dated 10 April 1943 (emphasis added).

At that time Curzon also verbally informed Koo "that we [Britain] regard ourselves as at liberty to deal with Tibet as an autonomous State, if necessary without futher reference to China, to enter into closer relations with her, to send an officer to Lhasa from time to time and to give the Tibetans any reasonable assistance they might require in the development and protection of their country."[72] These communications set formal British policy with regard to the status of Tibet until 1943.

In the spring of 1943, while the threat of war with China hung heavy over Lhasa, His Majesty's Government contemplated discarding the fiction of Chinese suzerainty and supporting Tibet's claim to independence. A Foreign Office report ("Tibet and the Question of Chinese Suzerainty") presents the case for shifting policy:

> Chinese plans and propaganda for a post-war settlement in the Far East aim at securing independence from British rule for such territories as India, Burma and Malaya. The real motive, so far as the two latter are concerned, is undoubtedly to clear the ground for Chinese political and economic domination, which the people of these regions would be in no position to resist if left to themselves. The Chinese are the least sentimental and altruistic of nations but they are shrewd propagandists and have been clever enough to present their aspirations as an unselfish desire to secure for their neighbours the same freedom from foreign imperialism that they themselves desire. Chiang Kai-shek has said that "China has infinite sympathy for the submerged nations of Asia, and towards them she has only responsibilities—not rights". The Atlantic Charter is invoked on behalf of the British, Dutch and French Colonies; but when it comes to Tibet and Mongolia, who have successfully emancipated themselves from Chinese domination, it would seem that the case is different. We are expected to accept an *ex parte* statement that these territories form part of the Chinese republic, and that any tendency to contest this would be offensive to the Chinese. . . . I see no reason why the Chinese should be allowed to get away with it as easily as that; and I would urge that, apart from the strategic value to India of having an independent Tibet as a buffer State between herself and China, we can, when the time comes, make good use of the Tibetan case to expose China's pretended altruism in attacking our hold on our own Far Eastern possessions.

72. FO371/35755, letter from R. Peel, India Office, London, to the Foreign Office, London, dated 7 May 1943.

> In order to give effective support to Tibet's claim to complete independence, we should, I submit, abandon our previous willingness to acknowledge China's suzerain rights. We are perfectly free to do so because our previous offers to make this admission were contingent on an agreement involving mutual concessions [i.e., the Simla Convention], which we were never able to get.
>
> A further reason for discarding our previous attitude towards Chinese suzerainty is that it hampers our freedom to make treaties with the Tibetans themselves. In the matter of the Indo-Tibetan frontier, for instance, the agreement reached in 1914 has not proved satisfactory in practice and the Government of India would like to conclude a new and more binding agreement with Lhasa. . . . But so long as we continue to recognise the overlordship of China it will be difficult to assert the validity of an agreement with the vassal State as against the objections of the suzerain in such an important international matter as a frontier.[73]

On 29 April 1943 the British Foreign Office sent a proposal regarding the withdrawal of British recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet to the India Office, the Government of India's headquarters in London. The Foreign Office letter (not available in the archives) appears to have emphasized the benefits to India with regard to defense and to the settlement of outstanding questions between India and Tibet, e.g., the Indo-Tibetan border. It suggested that no public or diplomatic statement be made regarding the change of policy but that Britain initially enact this new position by refraining from alluding to Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. The response by Peel of the India Office on 7 May supported the Foreign Office's suggestion, although, for the record, it set out a number of arguments against altering the current policy. These caveats are illuminating.

> (a) China is bound to absorb Tibet at the end of the war if not before and that we can do nothing effective to prevent it. . . .
>
> (b) in the event of India gaining her independence, we shall be unable to help Tibet further and that therefore it is a poor service to the Tibetans to encourage them against the Chinese now. As regards this, we shall desire in our own interests to maintain the Tibetan buffer for as long as we are responsible for India's foreign relations and we shall have

73. FO371/35755, Tibet and the question of Chinese suzerainty, dated 10 April 1943.

an obligation to pass on to an independent Government of India—if and when such an independent Government is established—India's existing buttress of buffer States. . . .

(c) the developments of modern war have rendered out of date the policy of the buffer state.

(d) the withdrawal of our recognition of Chinese suzerainty may precipitate a Chinese attack on Tibet.

(e) it would be very awkward *vis-à-vis* the Chinese, particularly at the present moment when we can do little against the Japanese, to announce that we do not recognize Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. . . .

(f) Chinese suzerainty over Tibet is rooted very deep in history and, even though the Tibetans refuse to acknowledge it now, they might quite possibly be ready to do so in return for a general settlement on lines satisfactory to themselves, as they were in 1934.[74]

In the end, Britain again decided, as it had many times earlier, that withdrawal of recognition of Chinese suzerainty might precipitate a Chinese attack on Tibet which it was in no position to counter militarily. Unable to make a commitment to direct support for Tibetan independence and unwilling to believe that Tibet, with British training and armaments, could defend herself against China or unwilling to provide this level of aid, Britain retained the old dual policy, restated in a confidential memorandum given to the Chinese foreign minister, T. V. Soong, by Anthony Eden, the foreign secretary, on 5 August 1943, in London. The Eden memorandum is noteworthy for the very blunt first paragraph, which sets out that Tibet had been independent in a de facto sense since 1911, but it makes no changes in the fundamental issue of Tibet's international status:

Personal 5th August 1943

Dear Dr. Soong,

When you visited me on the 26th July, you spoke of Tibet and enquired as to our attitude.

74. FO371/35755, letter from R. Peel, India Office, to H. Ashley Clarke, British Foreign Office, dated 7 May 1943.

I have pleasure in sending you the accompanying informal memorandum which I trust will serve to clear this matter up.

(signed) Anthony Eden

His Excellency,
Dr. T. V. Soong.

TIBET

Since the Chinese Revolution of 1911, when Chinese forces were withdrawn from Tibet, Tibet has enjoyed de facto independence. She has ever since regarded herself as in practice completely autonomous and has opposed Chinese attempts to reassert control.

Since 1911, repeated attempts have been made to bring about an accord between China and Tibet. It seemed likely that agreement could be found on the basis that Tibet should be autonomous under the nominal suzerainty of China, and this was the basis of the draft tripartite (Chinese-Tibetan-British) convention of 1914 which was initialled by the Chinese representative but was not ratified by the Chinese Government. The rock on which the convention and subsequent attempts to reach an understanding were wrecked was not the question of autonomy (which was expressly admitted by China) but was the question of the boundary between China and Tibet, since the Chinese Government claimed sovereignty over areas which the Tibetan Government claimed belonged exclusively to their autonomous jurisdiction.

The boundary question, however, remained insuperable and, since the delay in reaching agreement was hampering the development of more normal relations between India and Tibet, eventually in 1921 the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Curzon) informed the then Chinese Minister (Dr. Wellington Koo) that the British Government did not feel justified in withholding any longer their recognition of the status of Tibet as an autonomous State under the suzerainty of China, and intended dealing on this basis with Tibet in the future.

This is the principle which has since guided the attitude of the British Government towards Tibet. They have always been prepared to recognise Chinese suzerainty over Tibet but only on the understanding that Tibet is regarded as autonomous. Neither the British Government nor the Government of India have any territorial ambitions in Tibet but they are interested in the maintenance of friendly relations with, and in the preservation of peaceful conditions in an area which is coterminous with the North-East frontiers of India. They would welcome any amicable arrangements which the Chinese Government might be disposed to

make with Tibet whereby the latter recognised Chinese suzerainty in return for an agreed frontier and an undertaking to recognise Tibetan autonomy and they would gladly offer any help desired by both parties to this end.[75]

China did not reply to this note, which reconfirmed that Britain considered Tibet a part of China, nor did Britain pursue it further, and the Tibetan government never knew how close they had been to winning British support for an independent Tibet.

THE TIBETAN GOVERNMENT PURCHASES AMMUNITION FROM INDIA

Tibetan doubts regarding the reliability and support of Britain and India had been heightened during the road-building issue and by a relatively minor incident that occurred in 1942, at the time of the dispute with Kung, when the Government of India delayed agreeing to send a telegram to China on behalf of the Tibetan government,[76] but it was the war scare of 1943 that pushed the Tibetan government to assess its military capabilities and the current state of the Tibetan army. The findings were alarming. The army's weapons and ammunition had deteriorated badly during the Reting regency, when only five Vicker machine guns, three drill-practice machine guns, ten Lewis guns, and four mountain guns had been purchased.[77] The government also found that their store of ammunition was dangerously low. Consequently, in mid-1943, the Taktra administration urgently requested the Government of India to sell it weapons and ammunition: five million rounds of rifle ammunition, 18,000 shells for their mountain guns, and 50,000 rounds for the Lewis and machine guns. Tibet also asked to buy twenty more machine guns, or, if possible, Bren guns.[78]

75. FO371/93001, letter from the British foreign secretary, A. Eden, to the Chinese minister, Soong, dated 5 August 1943. The Foreign Office instructed its ambassador in Chungking to "avoid an unconditional admission of Chinese suzerainty" (FO371/35757, telegram from the Foreign Office to the British Embassy in China, dated 21 July 1943).

76. FO371/41588, memorandum no. 3(4)-L/43, from the British officer in charge of the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 10 August 1943.

77. During the period 1914–1933, by comparison, Tibet had obtained 15,000 rifles, 20 machine guns, and 10 mountain guns (FO371/35758, telegram from B. Gould to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 26 June 1943).

78. Ibid.

At the same time, the Taktra government began to plan to increase the size of the Tibetan army by one-third to one-half and asked the British in India to train Tibetan troops in the use of the four mountain guns they had bought from the Government of India during Reting's reign. India agreed and sent a team of eighteen men, including two officers, to Gyantse to train the Tibetans in the autumn of 1943. In December of that year, a British ordnance expert was sent to Lhasa to examine the mountain guns. To his surprise, he found that the four guns had never even been unpacked. They were, however, in good working order and he proceeded to overhaul them. They were finally fired by the newly trained troops in a public demonstration in Lhasa.[79]

This initiation of plans to improve Tibet's military left the British with an important decision to make. As was discussed earlier, the British had provided arms and munitions to Tibet to maintain their influence there, but not to the extent that Tibet could confront neighboring countries or become independent of British India. Normally they sold old and out-of-date weaponry, and even that in pitifully small amounts.

Gould, the political officer in Sikkim, realized Tibet's military weakness and was sympathetic. He strongly recommended that the Government of India provide a reasonable supply of munitions. The Delhi officials, however, reasoned that that would be a mistake since it would open Britain and India to charges that the war effort was being diverted to enable Tibet to resist China, although they realized clearly that "refusal will leave Tibet without ammunition to resist aggression." They consequently overruled Gould and recommended to London that munitions should be provided to Tibet only *after* the war.[80]

The India Office in London decided on a policy that fell between the views of Gould in Sikkim and the Government of India in Delhi. Arguing that the sale of ammunition to Tibet was a continuation of past British and Indian policy and that the Tibetans would use the ammunition for police and defense purposes only, they concluded that the advantages of keeping Tibet friendly at this time outweighed the risks of

79. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 1 August 1943.

80. FO371/35758, express letter from the Government of India to London, dated 27 July 1943.

the negative propaganda the Chinese might make of the matter. Ther fore, they recommended to the British Foreign Office that the Tibeta be sold ammunition *but not new weapons.*[81] In November 1943, tl Tibetans were sold five million rounds of rifle ammunition but on 1,000 shells for their mountain guns and no Lewis or machine gu rounds. By late December 1943, this ammunition had reached Sikki and had begun to wind its way on pack mules toward Lhasa.[82] Tib had again been sold enough munitions to keep its army going, but n as much as it wanted or needed.

81. FO371/35758, letter from R. Peel, India Office, to Clarke, Foreign Offi dated 30 August 1943; FO371/35758, letter from A. H. Clarke to R. Peel, dated September 1943.

82. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 81.

CHANGE AND CONFRONTATION IN THE TWILIGHT OF WORLD WAR II

The years following the Anglo-Tibetan disagreement over control of Tawang (and NEFA) in the late 1930s had not brought the issue closer to resolution. The British sent several expeditions to NEFA, established cold-weather posts at Kargo and Riga in the Siang River area (see Map 7), and sanctioned annual tours in this area up to the McMahon Line, but they did not establish a permanent British administrative presence in the territories and did not try to prevent the Tibetans from collecting revenue there.[1]

The Taktra administration sent a senior official to Tawang in late 1942; when he departed, they permitted a small military garrison to remain to demonstrate Tibetan control.[2] They also held discussions with Bhutan about the repatriation of Tawang subjects in Bhutan and Bhutanese subjects in Tawang, an act the British saw as an attempt to gain external acceptance of their de facto administration of these areas.[3] F. Ludlow, the head of the British Mission in Lhasa, protested the presence of Tibetan troops in Tawang, and a month and a half after his

1. FO371/46123, "History of Situation in India's North East Frontier with Tibet," prepared by the India Office in 1943 and appended to a memorandum on the McMahon Line prepared by the British Foreign Office, dated 19 July 1943.

2. Ibid.; IOR, political external collection 36/file 23 no. pol. 3797/43, letter from the Assam government to the viceroy of India, dated 29 March 1943.

3. FO371/46123, "History"; IOR, political external collection 36/file 23 no. pol. 1695/1943, telegram from the Government of India to the secretary of state for India, dated 1 April 1943.

protest they were withdrawn, but the Tibetan government did not concede the issue of control and continued to collect taxes there.[4]

The Government of India reacted to these actions by requesting permission from London to assert administrative and military control over the entire area; or, in their words, to "vindicate" their claims to NEFA. The British Foreign Office grudgingly agreed to this proposal but instructed the Government of India to avoid military clashes between British and Tibetan forces, explaining that "the effect [of such clashes] might be disastrous, and we should be represented as being at our old game of adding to our territories under cover of a war undertaken for allegedly altruistic motives."[5] The Foreign Office added that active steps to occupy the Tawang area should be deferred until attempts had been made in Lhasa to settle the dispute.

THE GOULD MISSION OF 1944

At this same time, the Chinese government appeared to the British in India to have launched a deceptive propaganda campaign aimed at convincing the world that Tibet was actually then under Chinese administration. Basil Gould, the political officer in Sikkim, feared that unless these Chinese distortions were answered effectively, an international consensus could emerge that would greatly aid China in taking control over Tibet after the war. Gould therefore proposed to Delhi that a mission be sent to Lhasa to impress on Tibet the need to counter Chinese claims over Tibet, to propose a compromise to settle the Tawang/NEFA issue, and to strengthen the links between Tibet and India. Specifically, Gould wanted to prop up Tibet's international identity by having India agree to the appointment of a Tibetan representative to the Government of India and by encouraging Tibet to dispatch an envoy to the United States with presents for Roosevelt.[6] The Government of India agreed and requested permission for this mission from London, arguing: "Since it will be no less important from the point of view

4. FO371/35757, letter from F. Ludlow, dated 13 May 1943.
5. Ibid.
6. IOR, L/PS/12/4217, express letter from the Government of India to India House, London, as summarized in a minute by Blair, dated 22 April 1944.

of HMG and of the Government of India to maintain the Tibetan buffer after the war, it is in our opinion necessary to instruct Gould to make an attempt to bring the Tibetan Government to a realization of the dangers into which their apathy is leading them."[7]

The Government of India's proposal arrived in London on the heels of the Foreign Office's decision to maintain the status quo in regard to Tibet. Not surprisingly, the Foreign Office objected to enhanced Tibetan diplomatic relations with the United States and British India. Anxious to prevent a Sino-Tibetan confrontation, the Foreign Office indicated that while they were amenable to Gould's trying to induce the Tibetan government to "stiffen their attitude toward Chinese moves to undermine their independence," they did not think that the Chinese propaganda had a great effect. They warned the Government of India that they were opposed to Gould encouraging the Tibetan government to make a categorical statement about Tibetan autonomy, since this might provoke the Chinese. In fact, they felt that if the Chinese made overtures, the Tibetans should be encouraged to try to reach a settlement along the lines of the Simla Convention. The Foreign Office explicitly ordered Gould not to offer misleadingly strong commitments, because Britain did not want to defend Tibet militarily against China or even directly to support Tibetan aspirations for independence.[8]

Gould arrived in Lhasa in August 1944 (see Figure 47), in a political climate in which British friendship and reliability were being increasingly questioned. He met with the Kashag on 7 September and informed the shapes that Britain was willing to agree to Tibet entering into direct negotiations with China so long as Britain was kept informed. Gould then asked the shapes point-blank whether the Tibetan government still claimed to be autonomous. When he received an unequivocally affirmative replay, he told them:

> I have treated this [whether Tibet desired autonomy] in a serious manner because the British Government have lately been rather disturbed by what they call the supine attitude of the Tibetan Government towards China—for instance in the manner of the congratulatory telegram sent

7. FO371/41586, express letter no. 2914-x/44 from the Government of India to India Office, London, dated 3 April 1944.
8. IOR, L/PS/12/4217, minute from Blair, India Office, dated 21 April 1944.



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British officials in Basil Gould's 1944 mission: (left to right, seated) Richardson, Gould, Morgan (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

> to Chiang-Kai-Shek by the Tibetan Government. The outside world naturally would assume that these claims are genuine if they are not refuted by the Tibetan Government. People do not get anything that they want unless they ask for it, and ask consistently.[9]

To this the Kashag replied: "There is no reason for the British Government to be worried. We have not changed at all in our intention to remain autonomous. We will submit what you have said to the Regent

9. FO371/41589, note by Kusho Chang-ngo-pa (Ringang) of the Tibetan Foreign Office, who interpreted in the interview between the political officer in Sikkim and the Kashag on 7 September 1944. A week later B. Gould sent a formal note regarding this interview to the Kashag.

and let you know frankly what our views are, after we have had time to consider them."[10]

The Tibetan leadership was well aware of the joint press release, made in Chungking on 24 June by U.S. Vice President Wallace and Chiang Kai-shek, recognizing "the fundamental right of presently dependent Asiatic peoples to self-government, and the early adoption of measures in the political, economic and social fields to prepare those dependent peoples for self-government within a specified practical time limit."[11] Coming after the encouragement they had received from the Tolstoy and Dolan mission in 1943, these comments fueled Tibetan hope that they would be able to obtain de jure independence after the war. In this context Tibet saw the Gould mission as an unexpected opportunity to secure British support and interpreted Gould's remarks to the Kashag as an invitation to do so. The Kashag drafted a formal set of responses to be read to Gould and had these approved by the regent. They were presented to Gould on 30 October. The key point is the fourth, which requests British help in giving Tibet a voice in the postwar peace conference. As reported by Gould, the Kashag's response was:

> 1. they [the Kashag] thanked His Majesty's Government and Government of India for their interest and frankness.
>
> 2. from remote past there had been religious connection between Tibet and China and presents (?had been) exchanged. (?But) everyone knew that Tibet had always been independent.
>
> 3. in 1914 Treaty which followed on hostilities with China His Majesty's Government recognised Tibetan autonomy.
>
> 4. *in order that whole world may be aware that Tibet is autonomous Tibet Government desires help of His Majesty's Government in order to send a Tibetan delegation to post war peace conference.*
>
> 7. I had in addition recently informed them that Shen contemplated that Tibet should become a Province of China and be deprived of direct relations with His Majesty's Government. To this Tibet could never agree. They stated this with great emphasis.

10. Ibid.

11. FO371/41589, telegram no. 361 from B. Gould, Lhasa, to the Government of India, dated 30 October 1944, cited in telegram no. 14263 from the Government of India, New Delhi, to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 3 November 1944.

> 6. If Mr. Shen should wish to discuss future relations between Tibet and China, my Government would advise the Tibetan Government to try to reach a settlement on the lines of the 1914 Simla Convention. My Government would expect to be kept in close touch with any such discussions. I assure you that my Government would do all they can to help Tibet to secure a suitable settlement.[15]

Gould, who had come to "stiffen up" the Tibetan government, end by rejecting the Taktra administration's request for British suppo against a Chinese military confrontation. Britain, while professir friendship, fixed on a policy that could only ultimately result in Tibe subordination to China.

If Britain's vague offer of "diplomatic support" gave the Tibet government little satisfaction, the discussions regarding the Ind Tibetan border dispute were even more frustrating.

THE TAWANG NEGOTIATIONS

The viceroy's instructions to Gould insisted that Tibet reaffirm t legality of the McMahon Line, but offered in turn an important conce sion:

> You [Gould] arrive at Lhasa at a moment when [the] Government of India are deliberately taking steps to establish their position in territory which is theirs by virtue of the 1914 Treaty with Tibet. We must hold Tibetans to their treaty engagements while being prepared, if so advised, to consider *slight adjustments of frontier in favour of Tibet in the neighborhood of Tawang*. His Majesty's Government are not prepared to forego their Treaty rights with Tibet.[16]

Gould conveyed this to the Tibetans, indicating also that the Goven ment of India was willing to compensate Tibet for its loss of revenue i

15. FO371/46121, aide-mémoire submitted by B. Gould to the Tibetan Foreig Office. Paragraphs 1–6 were read to the Kashag on 4 December 1944, and the docume was handed over later in December.

16. FO371/46123, memorandum on the McMahon Line attached to a letter fro the Foreign Office to the British Embassy in China, dated 7 August 1945 (emphas added). These instructions to Gould had been approved by the British Foreign Offi and the India Office.

these areas. In the meantime, the Assam government continued to expand its control in the eastern sector of NEFA. On 19 October 1944, Walong, an important site on the Lohit River, was taken, and on 3 November the Assam government was informed by New Delhi that if the local Indian officers in the Se La area could protect the tribesmen from the Tibetan officials, the tribesmen could be directed to refuse payment of civil taxes to Tibet (see Maps 7 and 8).[17]

The Tibetan government, unaware of these latest advances, replied to Gould's proposal on 31 October, continuing its policy against directly challenging the *validity* of the McMahon Line while urging that the status quo be left intact. Gould reports on their response:

> 2. With regard to McMahon areas they [Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau] had to make a definite request. The Tibetan Government did not wish in any way to dispute the validity of McMahon line as determining the limits of the territory (subject to such minor adjustments as were contemplated in 1914) in which India and Tibet respectively are entitled to exercise authority. Thirty years since 1914 Tibet had in practice exercised authority and had enforced taxation in certain areas south of the McMahon line notably at and south of Menilkrai and in Dirang Dzong area. [See Map 8.] In the latter area monastic tribute also had been collected by Drepung Monastery.
>
> 3. The (?matter) of overwhelming importance in the near future would be how to secure a territorial and political settlement with China. Tibetan Government apprehended that departure from long existing status quo in such parts . . . of McMahon area as have hitherto been under defacto control would have two undesireable results. (a) It would have to be discussed in the National Assembly whose minds might better be employed with consideration of China-Tibet problems . (b) any friction over any India-Tibet issue would certainly be exploited to the utmost by China.
>
> 4. They enquired whether in these circumstances it would be possible for His Majesty's Government and Government of India to *postpone action in McMahon areas for a short time*. Kashag anticipated that Chinese Tibet issue would come to a head very soon. After a year or two way would be clear for His Majesty's Government to assert their rights without injury to main vital issue.

17. Ibid.

> 5. It was noticed that when I mentioned compensation for Drepung Monastery they did not even enquire what the amount might be. They were interested in nothing except the main question.[18]

The earnestness and logic of the Tibetan government persuaded Gould that it was impossible for Tibet to relinquish administrative control of these areas at this time; thus he switched his views and strongly advocated that the Tibetan government's position be accepted:

> I believe this presentation to be entirely genuine. Never before have I known Tibetan Government to be in so resolute and constructive and open a state of mind. . . .
>
> 9. For 8 years I have been second to none in advocating that if action is to be taken in the McMahon areas it should be prompt and vigorous. (?I therefore) run no risk of being misunderstood if I now recommend that suggestion now put forward by Tibet Government should receive most careful consideration. No one is more fully aware than His Excellency of principle that action has often to be adjusted to the essential requirement of the circumstances of the time and that often the half may be greater than the whole. The fact that action is 30 years overdue is not necessarily a good reason for hurry now.
>
> 10. In view of explicit acknowledgement of McMahon line referred to in paragraph No. 4 (which I could probably obtain in writing) I have no apprehension of loss of face vis-à-vis Tibet if we were to substitute for Walong a post well south of areas of defacto influence which is known to extend as far as Yepak near Menilkrai, and if we were to turn a blind eye to Dirang Dzong and Kalaktang for the time being. Within the McMahon line there are large non-Tibet areas which are perhaps more in need of the limited amount of attention available than Tibetan areas.[19]

The British Foreign Office instructed Gould that no posts already established in NEFA on a permanent basis would be withdrawn and that he should make it clear to the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau that Britain was not prepared to forego rights acquired in the Simla Convention. At the same time, Britain did not want to put any obstacles in

18. FO371/41589, telegram no. 364 from B. Gould in Lhasa to the External Affairs Department in New Delhi, dated 1 November 1944, as cited in telegram 14308 from the Government of India, External Affairs Department, to the secretary of state for India, dated 4 November 1944 (emphasis added).

19. Ibid.

the path of a Sino-Tibetan settlement; therefore it permitted Gould to demonstrate a willingness to be accommodating with regard to the details of the McMahon Line, and in particular with regard to the possibility of making an adjustment of the border in the Tawang area.[20]

On 4 December, Gould informed the Tibetan government of these views in an aide-mémoire. Its main points were:

> 8. My Government have no designs on Tibetan territory. But my Government do intend to maintain their rights; and they are glad to observe that the Tibetan Government do not dispute these rights.
>
> 9. With regard to matters of detail, and in order to meet the wishes of the Tibetan Government to the greatest extent possible, (i) My Government would be willing to alter the frontier so as to run from the Se La, not to the north of Tawang but to the south of Tawang. (ii) They will not for the present object to voluntary contributions for monasteries being collected even south of the Se La—but they would prefer instead to make an annual or lump sum contribution to the monasteries affected in this area. (iii) Private Tibetan ownership of land south of the 1914 frontier line will not be interfered with. (iv) If it is found that the holy places, TSO KARPO and TSARI SARPA, are on the British side of the frontier, but within one day's march of the frontier, the frontier in this area will be adjusted as was promised in 1914. There is no record of any other promises having been made in 1914; and items (i) and (ii) above are new offers.
>
> 10. On the other hand my Government request that officials of the Tibetan Government may be directed not to attempt exercise authority south of the Se La: and posts which the Government of India have established cannot be withdrawn.[21]

The Tibetan National Assembly convened to discuss the British aide-mémoire, but because of serious internal problems (discussed below and in the next chapter), by the end of December 1944, no response had been made. During this same period the Assam government continued to consolidate its control over the area south of the Se La pass

20. FO371/46123, memorandum on the McMahon Line attached to a letter from the British Foreign Office to the United Kingdom Embassy in China, dated 7 August 1945.

21. FO371/46121, aide-mémoire read to the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau on 4 December 1944 by B. Gould, given in writing soon afterward.

and in the eastern NEFA area. Although Tibet was angered by this, was not until the internal problems were resolved in April 1945 th the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau again turned to the Anglo-Briti dispute. At this time, they delivered to the head of the British Missi the following strongly worded protest:

> In the map showing the red line as the Indo-Tibet frontier it shows all the areas below Tawang as within Indian territory. But the Political Officer in Sikkim said that slight adjustment of the boundary could be made based on the Se La. The actions of the Government of India in taking over and sending troops and in saying that they cannot withdraw the troops stationed in an indisuptable Tibetan territory are regretted, because we look upon the Government of India for reliance and assistance. The Sino-Tibetan question is being negotiated with the Govt. of India as the intermediary and it is not yet been settled, besides the territories mentioned above have not yet been shown as having been included within the Indian territory in the treaty. In consideration of the fact that this question has not been raised for the last 30 years or so since Wood-Tiger Year (1914), we regret to say that we cannot agree with the Government of India's new action in taking over these Tibetan areas within Indian territory. If the officers and troops stationed at Kalaktang and Walung are not withdrawn immediately, it will look something like *a big insect* [sic] *eating a smaller one* and thereby the bad name of the Government of India will spread out like the wind, and it will undoubtedly affect the feelings of the general public of Tibet. Major Sherriff also said that the Government of India suspect that Chinese may have design towards some Tibetan areas on the frontiers from the direction of Burma; if it is so, we can assure the Government of India that we will certainly see to the defence of our own territory. As you know very well that the cause of the present world war is due to the big power wanting to grab the smaller power, therefore in consideration of the welfare of Tibet as it is a small religious country and to promote a good Indo[*sic*]-Tibetan relation, will the Government of India very kindly withdraw their occupational officials and troops from places where they are stationed at present.[22]

22. FO371/46122, copy of the Tibetan government's official English translation the original Tibetan letter from the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau to the Governm of India via the British Mission, dated 27 April 1945. This was contained in confident memo no. 3(2)-L/45, dated 29 April 1945, which, in turn, was contained in a letter fr the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 9 May 1945.

The Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau orally added: "In order to avoid breaking the Indo-Tibetan relation, would you kindly give us a special consideration in this case and leave the boundary as it was before without any interference. Please report this matter to the Government of India through the Political Officer in Sikkim and let us have a reply."[23] Gould then returned to India, having come no closer to a solution.

The Tibetan legal arguments, though far from cogent, reveal their strong commitment to maintaining control over NEFA and thus their unwillingness to accept the McMahon Line.

The Government of India was committed to taking actual control of NEFA. They responded to the Tibetan note of April by reiterating that they were not taking any Tibetan territory but that all of NEFA was British by virtue of the Simla Convention. Since the Tibetans had not responded to the British offer regarding Tawang, another copy of Gould's aide-mémoire was included. The British position is illustrated in a telegram from the External Affairs Department in New Delhi to the Secretary of State for India in London:

> Worst possible outcome would be that Tibet Government under the influence of monasteries and prompted by Chinese might denounce the 1914 Convention and exchange of notes and even demand the withdrawal of our mission from Lhasa, at the same time shifting their policy towards Chinese. Even if Tibet were tempted to take this action, in agreement with Gould we do not think we can be deterred from occupation of these areas. Moreover, Tibet Government is largely dependent on India's goodwill for supplies, and their fear of absorption by China remains real one. We think therefore that we must persist in the present course of action on the lines proposed.[24]

All of this led to another British mission being sent to Lhasa. Basil Gould retired in 1945 as political officer in Sikkim and was replaced by J. E. Hopkinson, who, in late 1945, went to Lhasa to raise the issue of the McMahon Line once again. He fared no better than Gould had, but his interview with Surkhang Shape is particularly revealing because Surkhang was the shape most sympathetic to modernizing Tibet:

23. Ibid.

24. FO371/46122, telegram no. 5701 from the Government of India, External Affairs Department, to the secretary of state for India in London, dated 25 June 1945.

> [Hopkinson said] "Now likewise I want friendly discussion of the Tibetan letter of April, you know the letter I mean—that rude letter, about a big insect eating up a small insect." At an early stage Surkhang Shape asked with a knowing air, whether our Government had fulfilled all the eleven articles of the 1914 Agreement, rather implying by this tone that we had not. . . . I suspect he had in mind the view voiced by his father, Surkhang Dzasa (Foreign Secretary) that the validity of the portion of the Agreement relating to the McMahon line is conditional on our arranging a Sino-Tibetan settlement. . . . "British policy", he said, "has changed. The British are now giving Indians liberty. What benefit will it be to the 'English Government' to take portions of Tibetan territory?" . . .[After recounting the local history of Tawang and Dirang Dzong going back about 160 years, he said,] "Why did the British not occupy the area in 1914? Why did they not stop our tax collectors forthwith from that date?" On my replying that this was doubtless due to the pre-occupations of World War I, he asked "Why then did the British, much more hard pressed in Burma etc. press forward the occupation during World War II?" I [Hopkinson] said that it was our area to do what we like with" . . . [and when Hopkinson suggested he and Surkhang together visit Tawang so that they could make suggestions based on local knowledge, Surkhang replied frankly,] "My name would be forever blackened, if during my Shape-ship I were to give away territory we have held for 30 years since the treaty."[25]

The Tibetan position was not entirely without support in the Britis Foreign Office in London. Sir R. Campbell, in a minute written i 1945, expressed views similar to those of Surkhang:

> There are the makings of a complicated dispute in which we might find it difficult to explain why we were undertaking an occupation policy at this time to enforce a line which was drawn some thirty years ago and which is so obscure that it was discovered in 1935 that neither the Political Officer at Sikkim nor the Government of Assam were even aware of its existence.[26]

Nevertheless, the dispute continued unresolved, even after 194 when India became independent. In the intervening years, the Tibetar

25. FO371/53613, enclosure no. 1 to telegram no. 365 from Hopkinson to t British Foreign Office, New Delhi, dated 21 December 1945.
26. FO371/46122, minute by Sir R. Campbell.

continued to exercise complete control in the main Tawang area north of the Se La pass and the British kept their outposts in the other areas.[27] However, as we shall see in Chapter 15, the antipathy toward Britain that was generated by the border developments and by Britain's refusal to agree "to see Tibet through to the end" vis-à-vis China greatly increased the pressure on the Tibetan government to yield to the pro-Chinese elements in Tibet and seek a bilateral agreement with China.

Gould's and Hopkinson's exchanges with the Kashag reveal that the shapes had a reasonable understanding of the dangers facing Tibet after the war and were pursuing alternate strategies aimed both at convincing the British to stand between Tibet and China so that they could maintain de facto or de jure independence and at negotiating a bilateral agreement with China to preserve the essence of Tibetan internal self-government while acknowledging Chinese superordination. They also began to implement a modest course of modernization so that they could more effectively face China on their own.

ATTEMPTS AT MODERNIZATION

As long ago as the time of the Gould mission of 1936, Tibet had unsuccessfully tried to persuade India to supply it with wireless equipment. The confrontation with China over the transport road in 1941–1943 had reaffirmed the importance of wireless communications and had induced the Tibetan government to broach the subject with American officers Tolstoy and Dolan when they visited Lhasa in 1943. As was discussed in Chapter 11, the Americans responded favorably, recommending to OSS that the United States provide Tibet with three fully equipped portable wireless stations so that a trans-Tibet network could be set up in the border areas such as Chamdo, Gartok, Nagchuka,

27. As late as February 1947, a Tibetan tax collector and a large party of Tibetans advanced some fourteen miles into the Indian-administered part of NEFA but were turned back by the assistant political officer in charge of the Siang valley, who was backed by a detachment of Assam Rifles (FO371/63943, annual report of the British Mission in Lhasa for 1947). Tawang itself was not taken over by India until February 1951.

Tsöna, and Rima.[28] This communiqué was sent through Gould, w immediately advised his superiors in Delhi that Britain should also gi Tibet transmitting equipment so as to lessen the impact of the Ame can gift of the wireless sets.[29]

In the United States, W. Donovan, the head of OSS, approved T stoy's recommendation, arguing to the Division of Far Eastern Affa of the State Department that this would be a historic precedent th would open Tibet up to U.S. influence. The State Department r sponded that such support would inevitably "cause irritation and c fense to the Chinese" and urged OSS to drop the idea.[30] Donovan, n easily deterred, continued to press for approval. The State Departme in turn tried to forestall a decision by asking General Stillwell in Chi to render an opinion as to whether this would offend Chinese suscep bilities.[31]

Ultimately, the United States Government presented three wirele sets and five receiving sets to Tibet. The British, now eager not to l left out, gave Tibet two more sets and, at the request of the Tibet government, agreed to train Tibetans at their Mission in Lhasa to o erate them.[32] This training was not an easy task since it involved n only transmitting and receiving but also maintenance of the sets, a this required some basic Western education. H. E. Richardson co mented:

> The Tibetan Government have shown great eagerness to get the equipment as soon as possible, but it is probable that they do not fully appreciate the difficulties there will be in setting up an efficient wireless network. The officials who are undergoing training are reported to be very keen, but they are few in number and have no technical background, and

28. U.S. Foreign Relations, China 1943, 983.01/946, memorandum from W. Do ovan, director of OSS, to S. K. Hornbeck, advisor on political relations, U.S. State I partment, dated 12 April 1943.
29. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 80–81.
30. U.S. Foreign Relations, China, 1943, 983.01/946, from W. Donovan, direc of OSS, to S. K. Hornbeck, advisor on political relations, U.S. State Department, da 12 April 1943 and 30 March 1943.
31. U.S. Foreign Relations, China, 1943, 983.01/944, memorandum from the sistant secretary of state, A. Berle to W. Donovan (OSS), dated 23 April 1943.
32. IOR, L/PS/20/D222, Richardson, Précis, 1945: 81.

the very small number of Tibetans who know any English limits the choice of suitable people to train.[33]

The British Lhasa Mission's report of a conversation with one of the Tibetans who went to school in London in 1913 is also revealing:

> I took this opportunity of discussing with Ringang the question of future Tibetan wireless officials and their treatment by the Government. No officials draw pay which is of any use to them. Their money has to be made in other ways, and Government posts are not sought after because of the pay the post carried, but because of the opportunities it offers for money making. A future wireless official might draw pay of Rs. 200 a year, and if this is all he is to get, he will not want the job. I suggested that Ringang tell the Kashag that unless a dzong [district] is given as well as the post of wireless official, no one will show any keenness. The Kashag have agreed, I understand, that some such arrangement must be made. Better than this would be adequate pay and the prospect of adequate rank, and I intend to talk to the Kashag about this at our next party on January 30th.[34]

Richardson and G. Sherriff also advised the Kashag that if they were to utilize Western technology, many more English-speakers would be needed. The British pointed out that English had become the most widely known language in the world and that Tibet should arrange to produce a sizable corps of officials who knew it.[35]

The importance of English for the development of Tibet was not a new idea there. The late Dalai Lama had sent four young aristocrats to London in 1913 to receive a British education (see Chapter 5), and in 1923 he opened an English school in Gyantse under the tutelage of Frank Ludlow, an Englishman. However, when the Dalai Lama turned against the military clique in 1924, these initial moves were terminated. A few aristocrats continued to send their children to India for schooling, and a few children of officials were tutored at the British Mission, but after 1926 there was no program to teach English in Tibet. In

33. Ibid.
34. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 23 January 1944.
35. Ka shod (Kapshöba) and Lha klu (Lhalu), 1983: 55.

1938, Reting sent a few boys to the British Mission to learn some English and Hindi, but this was solely to enable them to work more effectively in Reting's own trading company in India, and the group included no government officials.

Because of the need for English-educated officials to operate the wireless units, hydroelectric works, and other modern technology, the shapes, with the Chigyab Khembo Ngawang Tenzin, approached Taktra with a plan to open a school.[36] He quickly agreed, rationalizing that such a school was merely an extension of the late Dalai Lama's policy. In January 1944, the Kashag asked the British Mission in Lhasa for help in finding a good headmaster; on their advice, R. A. Parker was hired. The new school was to combine Tibetan education for part of the day with English education for the remainder.[37]

A site for the school was selected in the center of town and a substantial construction budget was allocated.[38] All books and supplies left from the earlier Gyantse school were sent to Lhasa, and Parker purchased the remaining items from India. To facilitate the recruitment of students, the Yigtsang and the Tsigang called meetings of all monk and all lay officials, respectively, explaining the nature of the new school and asking them to enroll their sons or, in the case of monk officials, their nephews and monk disciples.[39] Thirty-three lay aristocratic children and ten commoners ranging in age from about seven to eighteen were enrolled; significantly, no pupils were relatives of monk officials.[40] It very soon became obvious that many among the monk-official segment and the monasteries strongly objected to the school, fearing that it represented a major threat to religion and to the Tibetan monastic system. In the two decades that had elapsed since the confrontation and de-

36. The four shapes at this time were Phünkang, Bönshö, Surkhang, and Temba Jayang.

37. Ka shod (Kapshöba) and Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 56.

38. The budget included 25,000 *sang* in cash and 4,700 *ke* of barley (ibid).

39. The four tsipöns were Lukhang, Kapshöba, Lhalu, and Shakabpa.

40. Ka shod (Kapshöba) and Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 56. R. A. Parker reports that the original pupils were thirty-eight boys aged five and a half to seventeen, of whom twenty-eight were from the aristocracy (sons of officials) and the remainder from the middle class. He states he was told that the Tibetan rationale for this division was that if Tibet was going to have English-speaking officials, they would need to have English-speaking clerks. (FO371/46122, brief report on the English school in Lhasa submitted from Shigatse by R. A. Parker, headmaster, dated 26 January 1945.)

struction of the pro-Western military clique in the mid-1920s, the monastic segment had gained no awareness of the grave danger China presented to Tibet, or at least would present after the war.

The school was officially opened on 31 July.[41] At the opening ceremony Kapshöba, one of the heads of the Tsigang, read the regent's official pronouncement:

> All political activities no matter how large or small they may be depend not only on the intellect and ideas, but also on composition and arithmetic. Nowadays, unlike previously, the educational emphasis is more on practical science everywhere. Therefore it is necessary to have not only a perfect basis in the traditional abstract arts and arithmetic, but a thorough knówledge of the English language and the other educational topics prevalent in the rest of the world. For that reason, the late 13th Dalai Lama who foresaw the future sent a few Tibetan Government officials to London for such education with no consideration for expenditures. Thereafter, in the Water-Pig year, they established another school at Gyantse with Ludlow as the teacher. Students were selected by the Tsigang from the various aristocratic lay official families.
>
> Now it is necessary for us to continue the great idea and the important decisions of the late Dalai Lama. We are here to establish this school where one can study both Tibetan and English. As far as admission of students is concerned, only the real sons of medium and lower aristocratic families can be admitted.[42]

The regent's eloquent justification of this school and his efforts to allay the monastic segment's fears were not successful. After two or three weeks of classes, the monastic segment openly raised objections. It appears certain that important conservative monk officials encouraged the monks to take action,[43] and it is also generally understood that

41. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 30 July 1944.

42. Ka shod (Kapshöba) and Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 62–63. The school was divided into two sessions, a morning unit from 8 A.M. to 12 noon during which Tibetan was taught, and an afternoon session from 1 to 5 P.M. when English and arithmetic were taught. (FO371/46122, brief report on the English school in Lhasa submitted from Shigatse by R. A. Parker, headmaster, dated 26 January, 1945.)

43. A Sera Che *geshe* (Thubten Thuwang, interview) reports that a high government official went to the Sera Che Abbot and warned him of the danger the school presented to the monastic system and to religion. This prominent official told the abbot that not only were the sons of lay officials going to the school, but that monks (actually,

Shen, the new Chinese representative, viewed the school as a British attempt to tear Tibet further away from China and that he lobbied the monks to close the school.[44] Kapshöba and Lhalu mention that the former regent, Reting, was among those opposed to the school.[45]

The abbots and other conservative monk officials believed, as they had in 1920–1925, that educating young and impressionable boys in the English style of thinking would change their attitude toward Buddhism and the Tibetan way of life. They feared that such boys would no longer be strong patrons of the monastic order and that the income of the monasteries would eventually be severely damaged. The monks also feared that as these young boys became ranking officials, they would want to give predominance to the temporal segment of the Tibetan government, thus potentially endangering the dominance of Tibet's religious form of government. In contrast, the monks did not consider future Chinese domination as a threat to religion. The Three Seats had many monks from Kham and Amdo who had lived under Chinese rule, and those areas had many monasteries of their own. The Manchu emperors, moreover, had been patrons of Tibetan Buddhism. The same, however, could not be said of the Christian British. Consequently, the abbots and monks were unalterably opposed to the school.[46]

Led by Jungnay of Drepung monastery's Gyeba college and by the abbot of Sera Che college, meetings regarding the school were held in each monastic college. These discussions produced agreement that if the government was unwilling to close the school on its own, the *dobdo* monks of the three monasteries would be sent en masse to close the

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monk officials) were also supposed to go; this, he argued, would gradually destroy Buddhism, so the abbot should speak out before it was too late. (The *geshe* refused to divulge the name of the prominent official.) Former Tibetan officials and the British records speculate that Kapshöba himself was the main official who sought to sabotage the school through the monastic segment. Although this does not make a great deal of sense, since his own son was Western-educated, Kapshöba was noted for double-dealing. Some suggest that his opposition to the school was an attempt to build a support base among the monastic segment and to develop a strong relationship with the new Chinese representative, Shen.

44. Surkhang, interview. Shakabpa (1967), and a number of other officials we interviewed all suspect that the Chinese played a role in inciting the abbots.

45. Ka shod (Kapshöba) and Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 65.

46. Ibid.: 67.

school by force.[47] Having decided on confrontation, the abbots requested that the Kashag convene a meeting of the National Assembly. Since the abbots dominated the assembly, they felt confident that they could influence the assembly to recommend closure of the school. The Kashag responded that the new school was approved by Taktra Regent for the long-term benefit of Tibet and that the monks were exaggerating the importance of the issue.[48] The abbots insisted on the assembly considering the issue, and by early October 1944 the school's future looked less than promising.[49] In the bazaar, rumor had it that the *dobdo* monks were going to kidnap the students and take them to the monastery, a threat the lay-official families believed.[50]

Just as pressure to disband the school was reaching its apex, Lhasa was stunned by the news that a group of monks from Sera monastery had murdered the acting district commissioner of Lhundrup Dzong. Sera monastery, moreover, challenged the government by refusing to give up the guilty monks. Faced now with a serious internal monastic threat, the Kashag and the regent decided the prudent course of action was to close the school and thereby preclude the possibility that the monasteries might unite against them. Thus, in January 1945, during the three-month school winter holiday, the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau notified the British Mission in Lhasa that they had decided to close the school permanently, due to public pressure. The explanation they offered is simple and basically forthright: "It is found that there is open resentment and strong public feeling against school because most of the boy(s) are from the nobility and so young that they are not capable of judging for themselves and therefore they are afraid of its leading to changes in habits and religious belief."[51]

47. Ka shod (Kapshöba) and Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 65. The *dobdos* were "fighting monks," comprising more than 10 percent of the 20,000 monks enrolled in Drepung, Sera, and Ganden. See Goldstein 1964 for a detailed discussion of these unusual monks.

48. Ka shod (Kapshöba) and Lha klu (Lhalu) 1983: 66.

49. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letter from British Mission for the week ending 24 September 1944.

50. Since *dobdos* were notorious for stealing young boys for homosexual practices, these threats to the new school had overtones beyond simply holding them in the monastery.

51. FO371/46121, translation of letter from the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau cited in telegram no. 81 from British Mission in Lhasa to B. Gould, dated 18 January 1945.

Thus, after only five months, the second attempt to open an English school in Tibet ended in failure. The monastic segment demonstrated again that while it was willing to allow the introduction of Western goods such as weapons and wireless units, it would not permit changes that might alter the balance of power in Tibet. Tibet continued to face the future while firmly rooted in the past.[52]

There would be no further attempts to modernize Tibet for three years, for the country was on the eve of a bitter, monastic-led civil war. The Lhundrup Dzong incident (to be discussed in Chapter 13) began a bitter internal dispute between Taktra and Reting that continued unabated until 1947, sapping the vitality of leadership, paralyzing the government, and leaving Tibet hopelessly divided. Just as it was becoming obvious that Tibet would for the first time in this century soon have to face a powerful and energetic China, all of Tibet's energy was channeled into a life-and-death struggle between Taktra and Reting.

52. The school closing did not alter the Kashag's conviction that English-educated officials were necessary, and they informed the British Mission in Lhasa that they still wanted to maintain close relations with Britain and were planning to select the best boys from the school to send to India to study (ibid.).

13

THE SEEDS OF REBELLION

Monasteries in Tibet held an annual series of prayer festivals, at which most of the monks read prayers in the monastery's huge meeting halls. These prayer festivals were financed in a number of ways, including endowments for specific prayer festivals. These endowments were much like the endowments of Western universities, in that the capital was invested and only the annual interest was expended. In Tibet, endowment capital was invested as loans to farmers and traders at an interest rate of about 25 percent per annum. It was the collection of such loans that precipitated the Lhundrup Dzong incident.

THE LHUNDRUP DZONG INCIDENT

In the autumn of 1944, a group of nine or ten monks from Sera Che college, with one from Ngagpa college, went to Lhundrup Dzong, north of Lhasa in Phembo, to collect loan interest.[1] Before they arrived, however, a group of peasants went to the dzong's acting district commissioner and complained they were unable to pay that year.

One version of the story holds that in early 1944 the Kashag, with the approval of the National Assembly, had offered exemptions on the principal and interest of older loans and set up fixed annual payments on loans contracted within the past ten years. They also made it illegal

1. These monk collectors were called grain stewards (in Tibetan: *'bru gnyer*).

to seize land, houses, wealth, or domestic animals from debtors in lieu of interest due.[2]

Another version denies that there was any new law in 1944 but says that during the 13th Dalai Lama's reign an order had been issued prohibiting the forcible collection of interest on old debts.[3] It contends that in the spring or summer of 1944, a number of Lhundrup Dzong peasants had asked the acting district commissioner to examine their old loans and adjust their obligations.[4] This request was passed on to the Kashag for investigation.[5]

A third version holds that a number of families notified the monastery that they were unable to pay because of a bad crop that year. The monks responded by threatening to seize other property, for example, a horse or yak, and it was to receive government protection against such forcible collection that the peasants appealed to the acting district commissioner.

Whatever the cause, the peasants did appeal and the acting district commissioner appears to have told them that Lhasa would very possibly help them. Moreover, when the monks came to collect the loans in late autumn, the case had not been settled and the acting district commissioner told the peasants that they did not have to repay the loans (or the interest on them) at that time.[6]

The monks, in their turn, asked the commissioner for help, arguing that they required the income from these loans to sponsor their prayer festivals. The commissioner, unmoved, ordered them not to try to collect by force before the government completed its investigation. This disagreement had larger political overtones because the acting district

2. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 386. This source erroneously reports that the Lhundrup Dzong incident occurred in the autumn of 1945, but, as will be seen below, British weekly letters from Lhasa definitively show that this occurred in the autumn of 1944, as all other Tibetan sources have it.

3. Lhalu, interview.

4. Horsur, interview; Gyentsen Tempel, interview. Gyentsen belonged to the shagtsang of the powerful Trunyichemmo Gyambumkang.

5. Gyentsen Tempel, interview.

6. Still another version holds that the Kashag actually told the acting district commissioner that since investigation of the case was not completed, the district should take physical control of the amounts due to monks, letting neither the monks nor the peasants take that grain until the case was settled (ibid.). Lhalu, who was on the subsequent investigating committee, has no recollection of this and doubts that there was such a formal order (Lhalu, interview).

commissioner was the brother of Chömpel Thubten, one of the four powerful trunyichemmo heading the Yigtsang Office and a supporter of Taktra (see Figure 48), while the monks were from Reting's Sera Che college.[7]

One of these monk collectors, Ngawang Namgyel,[8] angrily went back to Sera Che to inform its abbot, Ngawang Gyatso, about the impasse. Ngawang Gyatso was an intimate associate of Reting's, and a Triu Khamba noted for shortness of temper.[9] He instructed Ngawang Namgyel to appeal to the commissioner again, and if he refused to cooperate, to round up all the Sera Che monks in Phembo (for example, those conducting village prayers or visiting relatives) and do whatever had to be done to collect the loans.[10]

The Sera monks did as instructed, and in the ninth Tibetan month (roughly November 1944) they went to the district commissioner with traditional gifts such as a dried sheep's leg. He, however, merely lectured them haughtily on their obligation to abide by the rules of the government. In the series of increasingly insulting exchanges that followed, one monk, in a frenzy, started hitting the district commissioner on the head with the dried meat. The other monks, using anything they could get their hands on, such as a teapot and tea heating stand, beat and stabbed the commissioner repeatedly.[11]

The district commissioner's secretary, who had been working in the next room, came running to help but was stopped by the monks and

7. Chömpel Thubten or Bumtang (he was also known by the nickname "raven," because of his hooked nose) was actually the district commissioner, as this was his "salary estate" (*thabten phashi*) but, as was common in Tibet, he had sent someone to administer in his place.

8. One source says his name was Ngawang Dawa.

9. Reting Rimpoche had appointed him abbot in the face of considerable opposition from monks of Sera Che, who felt that because he had not yet served in the monastery as a *gegö* (disciplinary officer), he was not eligible to be appointed abbot. Reting, however, trusted Ngawang Gyatso implicitly and insisted on appointing him, forcing Sera Che to acquiesce (Thubten Thuwang, interview).

10. Gyentsen Tempel, interview. Another version says that the abbot told the monk to try to persuade the district commissioner, but if he did not listen, to kill him. The instruction to "kill," of course, was not literal but was, rather, a Khamba slang phrase that conveyed the meaning that the district commissioner's views should not be allowed to prevent collection of the money (Thubten Thuwang, interview).

11. Tibetans drink tea continuously during the day; it was customary to keep the tea hot by putting it in a glazed clay teapot on a metal or glazed clay stand containing hot coals.



48.

Four trunyichemmo (ca. 1948): (left to right, front) Lhautara, Lheting, Cawtang, Chompel Thubten (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

locked up in another room. In the meantime, the monks beat the district commissioner into a state of semiconsciousness and left. A servant who had run up from the kitchen found the district commissioner lying on the floor. As soon as she had revived him he asked where the monks were; when he heard they had left, he ordered her to go to the window

and count the number of monks leaving. The district commissioner then dictated a letter to his brother in Lhasa describing the beating in detail and, some say, even taking off his shirt to count the exact number of wounds. He died four or five days after this beating.[12]

When Chömpel Thubten received the letter he immediately submitted a petition to the Kashag demanding that the monks be punished. The Kashag agreed and ordered Sera Che and Ngagpa to hand over the guilty monks. It also appointed an investigating committee consisting of one monk official, Trunyichemmo Ngawang Tragpa (Lheting), and one lay official, Tsipön Shakabpa, who then persuaded the Kashag to increase the number of investigators to seven by adding the three other tsipöns and the two remaining trunyichemmo (Chömpel Thubten, of course, was excused).[13]

The investigating committee first called upon Chömpel Thubten to explain what had happened. Shakabpa, who was a member of that committee, recalls that all of them, including his Yigtsang colleagues, put very hard questions to Chömpel Thubten. Ngawang Tragpa told him that although he currently enjoyed a high reputation, if he followed what others said or insisted on representations that were untrue, it would create tremendous problems for the government.[14]

Shakabpa recalled that after listening to the committee warn him to be honest and to consider the effects of his statement:

> Chömpel Thubten blew his nose and put his monk's upper shawl over his shoulder, and said, "Who made this first? Wasn't it the assembly who

12. It is said that he even used pigeon feathers to determine the depth of each wound (Horsur, interview). Horsur said he heard this account from the secretary of the deceased acting district commissioner. It should be mentioned, however, that the Sera Che monks to this day claim that the official did not die as a result of the beating and that he actually went to Lhasa after the incident. They claim his family even had a picnic to celebrate his recovery. His death soon after this, they assert, was unrelated (Thubten Thuwang, interview). Virtually all other officials consider this merely a Sera Che rationalization, and even the autobiography of Tricang Rimpoche (Khri byang 1975: 233) stated clearly that the commissioner died as a result of the beating.

13. Shakabpa, interview.

14. Ibid. Lukhang, a tsipön, also warned Chömpel Thubten that if he was acting precipitately it could lower the prestige of the Yigtsang and Tsigang offices. He said, "Our decision must be straightforward, like the proverb, 'an egg should be able to carry a horse.'" (This derives from the belief in Tibet that if an egg is placed exactly upright, it will not break even if a horse stands on it; thus the proverb's meaning is that if something is true, nothing can alter it.)

> decided for the well-being of the people that all these old debts should be written off? And if it is within ten years then all the interest should be written off; and if it is within five years it should be only light interest? Wasn't this the decision of the assembly? The decision of the assembly should be carried out by the districts, and Lhundrup district happens to be my 'salary-base' and my brother was there looking after it. So it was really the assembly's decision he was following."[15]

Shakabpa endorsed Chömpel Thubten's remarks, commenting that "when the assembly decided to ease the interest burden the monasteries had to put their seal on it. They [the monasteries] cannot do something separately. If they had problems or complaints they should have done something about it before they put their seal on the assembly's decision."[16]

Following this investigation, the committee ordered the arrest of a number of peasants in Lhundrup Dzong who were relatives of the monks and again ordered the monastery to turn over for interrogation the monks involved in the incident. When the monks received this order, a meeting was held in Sera, consisting of representatives from each khamtsen and mitsen residence unit[17] and all the officials of Che college, including the abbot. Ngagpa college was represented at this meeting by Namdra Sherab, one of its most respected officials. The representatives decided not to relinquish the monks, reasoning that they had been working for the benefit of the monastery, not for their personal gain, and also that to do so would disgrace the college. They agreed to accept punishment by the government in the form of a fine imposed on the college as a whole, but they were unanimous in rejecting punishments for the individual monks.[18]

Sera Che then sent several representatives such as Reba Gyawu and Mugi Gyagba to Lhasa to convey the college's view that the monks were only doing their duty and that what happened was not intended as a show of disrespect toward the government. They requested, therefore, that the government withdraw its order that the monks appear

15. Shakabpa, interview.
16. Ibid.
17. For a discussion of khamtsen, see the Introduction, above.
18. Thubten Thuwang, interview.

individually. This stalemate continued for over a month, with the monks and the government repeatedly presenting the same arguments.

RETING'S VISIT TO LHASA

The tension surrounding the Lhundrup Dzong case was heightened by Reting Rimpoche's first visit to Lhasa since his resignation three years earlier. As was indicated in Chapter 11, from the beginning Taktra had distanced himself from his predecessor Reting and showed no favoritism to Reting's friends and supporters. Despite these signals, Reting and his advisors could not bring themselves to accept the fact that their creation, Taktra, was hostile to them. They attributed the disrespect shown to them to those around Taktra and concluded that if Reting could confront his old teacher, the latter would graciously allow Reting to return as regent. Reting, however, as a great lama and ex-regent, needed a special reason for coming to Lhasa. In February 1944, a "divine lottery" held at the Potala Palace appeared to provide such an opportunity when it revealed a danger to the Dalai Lama's health and life. In response, the Three Seats began to pray for the long life of the Dalai Lama, and Reting wrote letters to a number of important figures such as the monk-shape Temba Jayan, Phünkang Shape, the trunyichemmo Chömpel Thubten, the ex-abbot of Drepung's Ngagpa college (Ngawang Khechog), the abbot of Gomang college (Chömpel Gyebo), the Sera Töba Abbot (Gyentsen Sengge), the Sera Che Abbot (Ngawang Gyatso), and Tsipön Kapshöba, asking them to help arrange an invitation for him to conduct such prayers in Lhasa.[19]

The abbots responded favorably to this and met with the shapes and Trungtsigye to request them to convene the National Assembly to invite Reting to Lhasa.[20] Kapshöba, a member of the Trungtsigye at that time, reported that at this meeting he expected Temba Jayan Shape and Phünkang Shape, both of whom had received letters from Reting and were assumed to be in Reting's camp, to support the abbots strongly.

19. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 20–21. He was contacted by Reting regarding this plan.

20. Ibid.: 22–24.

He thought that the monk-shape, Temba Jayan, would take the lead, because Reting had indicated him as one of Reting's two main hopes. Temba Jayan, however, had been disappointed by Reting's later years in office, and though Reting had promoted him during his regency, he had become allied with Taktra. He spoke against bringing Reting to Lhasa. Kapshöba recalled that he was shocked when Temba Jayan said, "Concerning the prayers for the Dalai Lama, don't we have the Regent Taktra here like shining dew drops? Because of this, inviting Reting is unnecessary; it's like putting a seal made from dough on sealing wax. Isn't it better if, in the future, you abbots of the Three Seats do your religious studies [i.e., stay in the monastery and mind your own business]?" Bönshö Shape agreed with Temba Jayan; Phünkang Shape, although disputing the comparison of Reting to a "dough seal," did not argue forcefully that Reting should be invited, and the youngest shape, Surkhang, added that since Reting had gone to his monastery to pray to remove the danger to his life, it was not appropriate to disturb his meditations. Temba Jayan then addressed the abbots: "Isn't it better if you keep quiet? Isn't it better if you keep quiet? If we have to single out [the ringleaders], later it will be too late."[21] After such a strong negative reaction from three shapes, the abbots had to drop the idea. Taktra, moreover, took steps to avoid trouble by ordering the pro-Reting abbots to stay in their quarters and devote themselves to conducting meditation prayers for the long life of the Dalai Lama.[22]

Reting, however, still believed he could regain the regency if only he could speak directly with Taktra.[23] He ultimately induced the Sera Che Abbot to invite him to Lhasa to participate in Sera Che's consecration of their renovated assembly and prayer hall.[24] A campaign of rumors of Reting's impending return to power, apparently launched by Reting himself, began in the summer of 1944. In July, for example, Delerabden, a close associate of Reting's, told the British that "the great monasteries might ask the ex-Regent to return to Lhasa and again undertake

21. Ibid.: 25–26. In Tibetan: *bzhugs tshugs na dga' gi red da / phreng ba rdog 'bud byed dgos byung na phyis pa red.*

22. Ibid.: 28. This prevented them from fomenting discord among the common monks.

23. Reting Dzasa, interview.

24. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 29.

the Regency some time this Autumn";[25] and a Reting official told the British that the "term of Regency was originally fixed at 3 years, and that the ex-Regent had hopes of again assuming the office."[26] Similarly, in October 1944, there was talk that Taktra would retire in February or March of the following year.[27]

Amid these rumors, Reting arrived in Lhasa on 3 December 1944 with great pomp: his horses and mules were all of the highest quality and were arranged in groups by color; all his attendants wore the same kind of red-and-yellow brocade dresses; and even their beards were identical. His entrance was so grandiose that it prompted comments that even the Dalai Lama did not have such a beautiful entourage when he traveled.[28]

He was greeted in Lhasa like a returning regent. Some pro-Reting officials actually rode out two days' distance from Lhasa to meet him, while all the government officials, including the Dalai Lama's father and the shapes, greeted him one mile east of Lhasa at Möndrong Samba, where a reception tent had been erected.[29] And once he had arrived in Lhasa, government officials, monastic leaders, and traders rushed to seek his blessing in private audiences.

Indeed, his main goal in Lhasa was to regain the regency. Shakabpa recalled a conversation he had with Reting at that time:

> [Reting] told me to sit down. He had never told me to sit down before, and I sat down. Then he told me to come closer, so I moved a little closer. It was in the Reting Summer Cottage in Lhasa and Rimpoche himself was seated on a low throne. Then he again said to move closer, and I did. Now I was very close to him. He said, "We [Reting Labrang] are very close to the Shakabpa family; however, when I was Regent I could not help you at all [indicating sadness]. But Taktra has been a great help to you and that is good.

25. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 30 July 1944.
26. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 20 August 1944.
27. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 15 October 1944; Shakabpa, interview; Anon1, interview.
28. Shakabpa, interview; Dardo (Rimpoche), interview.
29. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending

"I put my door to the east with the hope of getting some good sunshine [indicating that he gave Taktra the regency expecting good to come from that], but the horns that have grown on the head are now sticking in the eyes [indicating that though you did something good for someone he in turn did something bad to you]."

He told me this that day from his own mouth. So how do I interpret that? Instead of help I got harm. So I didn't know quite how to interpret this.

I immediately got up and prostrated before him and told him, "Please try to keep the teacher-and-student relation [between Taktra and Reting] pure. And whatever complaints you have please make them straight to Taktra Rimpoche. I have no reason for strongly supporting Taktra against Reting, or vice versa. So whatever complaint you have, please make it directly to Taktra."

This didn't suit Reting's wishes and he didn't like my remark. He said nothing but started taking snuff. What he really wanted was for me to volunteer to do something [on his behalf with Taktra], but where is the power I have? I had no power. . . . Don't you think he meant that I should discuss the matter with Taktra? . . . It shows that they had some talk. It definitely indicates that they had a talk [before switching the regency]. But I would never dare to tell this to Taktra. How could I tell him? He is a very taciturn and very strict lama [with whom one could not talk easily].[30]

Reting appears to have also asked a number of other incarnate lamas speak with Taktra on his behalf.

The critical face-to-face meeting between Taktra and Reting to place at Taktra's residence, just off the Barkor. Reting later told Ges Thubten Thuwang that Taktra was not at all open and that the meeti of the two had lacked even the normal courtesy conversation.[31] Ku deling Dzasa recalls:

They met at the Photrang Sarpa. Though they had a meal together, Reting did not stay for a long time. . After Reting left the Photrang Sarpa, the talk started in Lhasa that Reting told Taktra, "I have trusted you and hoped that you would return the regency as you had promised, but I see it is not correct. You have made Sera Che the scape-

30. Shakabpa, interview.
31. Thubten Thuwang, interview.

> goat in the [Lhundrup Dzong] Incident and you show disfavor to the people, monks, and officials who have been friendly and close to me." Although we were outside the [closed] door I did not hear anything like this at all.[32]

Kapshöba claims that Reting first told Taktra that the danger to his life and health had passed and discussed the various measures he had taken to achieve this. He then said that he imagined that Taktra's age must be making the responsibilities of regent very hard and that this was the reason that he had come to Lhasa.[33] A similar version holds that Reting spoke more indirectly, saying, "It must have been difficult for you being regent; thank you."[34] Such a phrase allowed Taktra to bow out gracefully by agreeing that it had been hard to function as regent and continue his religious activities. However, Taktra reportedly said only, "[It has been] So-so, so-so."[35]

Whatever the exact nature of the exchange, Reting was thoroughly disheartened by this meeting. Taktra exhibited only coldness and disdain; moreover, he continued to reject compromise with the ex-regent's Sera Che college in the Lhundrup Dzong incident. The tone of this meeting soon spread all over Lhasa, and the number of visitors to Reting fell daily.[36] Humiliated and angry, Reting returned to his monastery before the Tibetan New Year. The next time he would return to Lhasa would be in 1947, as a prisoner of the government.

SERA CHE DEFIES THE GOVERNMENT

As the Tibetan New Year approached, the stalemate between the government and Sera Che showed no signs of resolution, despite attempts by Reting and his officials to persuade the government not to

32. Kundeling (Dzasa), interview.
33. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 30.
34. Lhalu, interview. In Tibetan: *sku mnyel po byung med 'gro thugs rje che* (*gu nyepo chung medro, thucheche*).
35. In spoken Tibetan: *Otshe, Otshe*. Lhalu, interview. Ka shod (Kapshöba [1985: 30]) says that Taktra pretended he did not hear Reting's comment and just said, "Ah, ah" (In Tibetan: *la la*) and did not answer Reting directly or try to hold a conversation with him.
36. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 30–31.

punish the monks. The Sera Che leaders anticipated the approaching Mönlam Prayer Festival (when all monks would be required to be in Lhasa) as both a threat and an opportunity. During this festival, authority for the city of Lhasa was transferred from the lay authorities to the monks of Drepung monastery.[37] Since Taktra was from Drepung's Gomang college, the monks of Sera Che feared that the government would persuade the Drepung officials to seize the Sera monks they suspected of being guilty.[38] The Sera Che monks therefore decided to boycott the Mönlam Prayer Festival unless the government agreed to release the Lhundrup Dzong peasants they had arrested and not to demand the arrest of the guilty monks.[39] As the second largest college among the Three Seats,[40] Sera Che felt confident that the government would find it difficult to refuse its compromise. The boycott threat was made about the middle of the Tibetan twelfth month (January 1945).[41]

At this juncture the Lhasa business community (primarily the Khamba trading firms with close links to the monasteries) and leading incarnations and monastic officials (such as Sera Mey's Phurbucho Rimpoche) tried unsuccessfully to mediate. It appears that the government had learned from their interrogation of the Lhundrup Dzong peasants that the murder of the district commissioner had not been simply a spontaneous incident perpetrated by lower-echelon monks, but that it had involved the Sera Che Abbot.[42]

Tension heightened until a direct confrontation between the monks and the government became a distinct possibility. The government could not permit Sera Che and Ngagpa colleges to boycott the Mönlam Prayer Festival—particularly that year, when the young Dalai Lama was going to attend the Mönlam under the sponsorship of Tshomöling Labrang, which was associated with Sera Mey college. It would be a terrible disgrace if the Dalai Lama's first attendance at the Mönlam were to be marred in any way. In Lhasa, rumors spread that the Sera Che

37. Control was actually in the hands of the Drepung *shenggo* (disciplinary) officials.
38. Pema Dorje, interview.
39. Gyentsen Tempel, interview.
40. The largest college in Tibet was Drepung's Loseling, which contained over 4,000 monks.
41. This date is cited in IOR, L/PS/12/4201, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 18 February 1945.
42. Horsur, interview.

monks were arming themselves and that many had volunteered to kill ranking officials during the Mönlam. A number of important officials such as the trunyichemmo Chömpel Thubten lent credence to these rumors by staying at the Potala Palace. The Sera Che Abbot had in fact decided to distribute Sera Che's weapons and fight if the government troops tried to force their way into the college.[43]

Despite last-minute mediation attempts, when the Mönlam Prayer Festival began on 14 February, the Sera Che monks did not appear. Geshe Thubten Thuwang recalled watching Lhasa during the first and the second day of the Mönlam from the roof of Sera Che. He said that the monks' spirits were high, and when he and the other monks saw the smoke rising in Lhasa, they would joke that now they must be having the morning tea, now the afternoon tea.[44] In the meantime the Kashag met for two days to discuss the boycott; the second meeting went on until an unprecedented 9:30 P.M. Unwilling to capitulate to the ex-regent's college but desperately needing to avoid an incident during the New Year's Prayer Festival, they played for time by sending word back to Sera Che via the trading community that if the monks attended all the Mönlam functions as usual, the Lhundrup Dzong peasants would be released and the case settled in April, when the Mönlam and Tshongcö prayer festivals would be over.[45] In essence, this was merely a guarantee that no monks from Sera would be arrested during the Great Prayer Festival, but the monks interpreted it to mean that the monastery would win the dispute. They therefore rejoined the prayers on 17 February.[46]

The government's plan was to open the case again after the Tshongcö, but only after the arrival of additional troops. They had no intention of settling the case in the monks' favor, as the monastery believed, but, rather, intended to exercise their authority over the monks

43. Thubten Thuwang, interview.
44. Ibid.
45. The Tshongcö Prayer Festival ends on the thirtieth of the second Tibetan month.
46. IOR, L/PS/12/4201, Lhasa letter from the British Mission for the week ending 18 February 1945. Shakabpa (interview), however, said they missed only the first practice day of Mönlam. Geshe Thubten Thuwang (interview) recalled that an order from the monastery government arrived at each monk's quarters ordering them to attend the Mönlam the next day.

and punish the murderers. To this end they quietly ordered the recall of 1,900 troops to Lhasa to augment the 1,500 already present in February.[47]

However, when the Tshongcö Prayer Festival was over, the government did not open the case immediately, because they were unsure how to suppress the monks without extensive bloodshed. This long silence puzzled the monastic leaders, who began to worry that the government was plotting against them. The monastery first requested and then insisted that the government settle the case as they had promised. The Sera Che Abbot and his associates met secretly with Shen, the new Chinese representative, and the monks now openly threatened to use their weapons against the government if they tried to storm the monastery.[48] Tension increased when the government issued an order on 3 June that banned both the spreading of rumors and the removal of valuables and other property from the city, and said that violators would be severely punished.[49]

A week later, the Tibetan government decided on a strategy. The government believed that the main obstacle to a satisfactory solution was the adamant position of the abbots of Sera Che and Ngagpa, particularly the former. The government therefore decided to dismiss them at the traditional audience for Sera abbots in Norbulinga in early June. On that day, all the abbots came except the Sera Che Abbot who, suspecting a trap, claimed to be ill. The government went ahead with the dismissal of the Ngagpa Abbot, taking his official yellow abbot robe (*chögo*). It also sent a letter to Sera dismissing the Sera Che Abbot, ordering him to bring his yellow robe to Lhasa.[50]

The Sera Che monks immediately convened a meeting of the heads

47. The 1,900 troops recalled to Lhasa consisted of about 500 troops each from Shigatse, Nagchuka, Namru, and Kham. Shakabpa told this to H. E. Richardson, who wrote it in IOR, L/PS/12/4201, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 27 May 1945. The 1,500 troops in Lhasa consisted of the 500 of the Bodyguard Regiment and 1000 Trapchi Regiment troops permanently stationed in Lhasa.

48. Shakabpa told the British representative that he suspected the Chinese were at the bottom of the trouble. (FO371/46122, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 27 May 1945).

49. FO 371/46123, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 10 June 1945.

50. Pema Dorje, interview; FO371/46123, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 17 June 1945.

of all the khamtsen in Sera Che and Ngagpa. Reba Gyawu, an influential monk, insisted that Sera Che should not turn over the abbot's robe under any circumstances, and the abbot himself, as he was preparing to arm the monks, strongly recommended defiance to protect the honor of Sera Che. At this time, Sera Che had 2,000 rifles that Kumbela had helped them buy and so could have put up serious resistance. Reting monastery also had about 1,000 Russian-made rifles. Agreement with Reba Gyawu was unanimous until Mugi Gyagba, the representative of Hamdong, the largest khamtsen in Sera Che college, spoke. He wanted to avoid great bloodshed by turning in the abbot's robe and argued that "the mountain landslide cannot be contained by a rope,"[51] meaning that the monks could not control the government. He went on to say that the interests of one person should not take precedence over the collective interests of the college and that the monks were only temporary inhabitants, not owners, of the monastery, which had been built by great lamas over many centuries; they had no right to destroy it for the sake of a few.[52]

Mugi Gyagba's position stunned the abbot and his followers, for it was apparent that the Hamdong monks would follow his lead. After this speech there was dead silence. When no one rose to challenge it, the Che Abbot took off his robes on the spot and threw them in front of Mugi Gyagba, saying, "I am only fighting for the reputation and benefit of Sera Che college, not for one man. I don't care anything for my personal well-being. I came from Kham as a monk-beggar [*apcho*] with only my walking stick. So if you want to hand over my robes, here they are. You go ahead." With this he stalked out of the meeting, went first to his quarters to vacate them, and then moved to Khardo Lama's quarters.[53]

The Che Abbot and several of his brothers then decided to flee to their home in Kham before the government arrested them for disobedience and their part in the Lhundrup Dzong incident. One brother went into Lhasa that very night to arrange for horses and supplies, and

51. In Tibetan: *ri nyil nas thag pas mi thub.* (Lobsang Chönden, interview.)
52. Thubten Thuwang, interview.
53. Ibid. If the abbot had brought the robe to the government himself, he would have been arrested.

soon afterward they left for Kham. A Sera Che manager delivered the abbot's robe of office to the government.[54]

When the government realized that the abbot, his manager, and others had fled, they immediately sent a group of soldiers to bring them back. A notice was also sent to all districts ordering them to capture or kill the fugitives, and particularly alerted Yuthok, the governor-general of Kham at Chamdo, where it was assumed that the abbot would head, since he was from the Kanze area in Chinese Kham. Yuthok posted soldiers at all the likely spots and eventually spotted him near Jyekundo. The abbot fled, disguised as a beggar, while his manager and his monk-relative bodyguards fought with the troops. The abbot's manager, who was also his brother, was killed. Because of the family resemblance, the soldiers mistook him for the abbot and notified Yuthok that they were returning with proof of their success, the head and hands of the Che Abbot.[55] Not until these arrived in Lhasa was the mistake discovered. The abbot had in fact reached Chamdo, where, disguised as a beggar, he had walked right past the soldiers posted on the main bridge. The abbot was welcomed by the Kuomintang and remained in Chinese Kham until the Chinese Communists took control of Tibet, at which point he returned to Lhasa with great pomp.[56]

Following these events, the investigating committee asked Sera Che to send representatives to Lhasa to discuss the Lhundrup Dzong case. The Sera officials complained that the presence of the three trunyichemmo on the investigating committee biased their chance for a fair hearing, since it was a trunyichemmo, Chömpel Thubten, who had filed the case against them.[57] The Kashag added two members to the investigating committee, the lay official Teiji Sambo and the monk offi-

54. Ibid. Ka shod (Kapshöba [1985: 33]) and Lha klu (Lhalu [1985: 8]) write that the abbot had already fled the morning the Ngagpa Abbot went to Norbulinga. They appear to be confused, for it is not reasonable that the Sera Che Abbot would have given up his position merely on a rumor that he would be arrested.

55. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 93.

56. Anon1, interview; Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 93.

57. FO371/46123, letters from the British Mission in Lhasa for the weeks ending 17 and 24 June 1945; memorandum from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 24 June 1945. In the latter, Shakabpa states that the monks had threatened the lives of the committee members.

cial Dombo (Khenrab Wangchug), and on 20 June, seventeen monk leaders appeared before them.[58]

The order of the initial session of the investigating committee was unusual: first came discussion; then advice from the committee; and, finally, interrogation. At the end of the first day the committee told the monks that it would be better if they all stayed in the city at the Potala Palace for a few days—in essence placing them under involuntary detention.[59]

Coming on the heels of the dismissal of the abbots of Sera Che and Ngagpa, this arrest of their leaders broke the monks' resistance, and eventually all the monks involved in the Lhundrup Dzong incident were imprisoned. During the committee's questioning, Reba Gyawu and another militant monk, Namdra Sherab, were insolent and defiant. Shakabpa, who was on the committee, recalls that at one of the many sessions Kapshöba got so angry that he hit one of them over the head with a writing slate.[60] Shakabpa recalled that day:

> Then Kapshöba ordered them to take these [defiant] monks down and give them whippings. To this some of the trunyichemmo and I said that it is not good to whip monks and if we could avoid this it would be better. But Kapshöba said, "No. Look at him" (pointing to a Ngagpa monk), "at how big they're all talking. They really need a good beating."
>
> Then they were taken down toward Sharcenchog [prison] and on the way the two defiant monks were whipped. The senior tsipön and trunyichemmo both walked down to where they were whipped so we also had to go down. While they were being whipped we said, "Oh, that's enough now."
>
> By that time they had received 40 or 50 very severe lashes. . . . The

58. Ibid. Thus the investigating committee came to be known as Tey Ken Trungtsi Gutril, "the nine: the seven trungtsi and the khenchen and teiji" (in Tibetan: *tha'i mkhan drung rtsi dgu sgril*).

59. Thubten Thuwang, interview. The next day, Mugi Gyagba of Hamdong khamtsen was released and sent back to Sera. Geshe Thubten Thuwang, a fellow member of his khamtsen, visited him when he arrived and was told that he had been released because he had spoken in favor of surrendering the abbot's robes.

60. Shakabpa, interview. Shakabpa also said of this: "For a member of the investigating committee to hit a witness over the head with a slate doesn't look nice. It was Kapshöba's sycophancy [that is, his trying to curry favor with the regent]. It was too much."

> Ngagpa monk was almost unconscious but Reba Gyawu was still very sassy. Those whippers had come from Shöl and they whipped them severely with a wooden switch. They also made some lay people who were to be questioned watch the whippings and they were all shivering by the end of it in fear.[61]

When the news spread that the monks were being flogged, Reting wanted to go to Sera Che to lead the monks in a rebellion against the government. He told Thubten Thuwang's nephew, who was his personal attendant, that "Taktra didn't have to be that cruel to our monks. I brought him up by first giving him the assistant tutorship [of the Dalai Lama], then the tutorship, and finally the regentship." Reting wept as he said this. However, Reting's key officials were strongly opposed to this course of action and, after much persuasion, Reting finally agreed not to go.[62] In the end, fourteen monks were punished for the Lhundrup Dzong incident, Reba Gyawu was exiled to Hor Trachen in Northern Tibet, and one Lhundrup Dzong layman was sent to exile in Phari.

The regent then appointed a learned old Mongolian *geshe* called Tendar as the new abbot of Sera Che. However, despite Tendar's membership in Reting's own Samlo khamtsen in Sera Che, he was very close to Taktra and disliked Reting intensely for having taken Samlo khamtsen's only estate for his labrang while he was regent.[63] At the same time, the government also moved to preclude later monastic violence by confiscating all of Sera Che's weapons, compensating the college for the loss by creating an endowment for a prayer festival.[64] Geshe Thubten Thuwang recalls that the weapons were all taken from their crates and set out on the roof of the college: "They were all brand new and well oiled and glistening in the sun. All the monks were heartbroken and had long

61. Ibid. Others, however, say that Shakabpa, a trusted confidant of Taktra's, was also among those urging harsh punishment.

62. Thubten Thuwang, interview.

63. This old *geshe* used to speak of Reting disparagingly, saying, "Let alone helping his own khamtsen after he became regent, he gobbled up our only estate." Ibid.

64. Ibid. The government based the amount of compensation it gave to Sera Che on the number of monks who appeared at the first meeting of the new prayer festival, on the twenty-second of the ninth Tibetan month. Sera Che therefore sent messages to their monks all over the country telling them to come on that day, and about 5,000 arrived. The government gave three *sang* to the endowment for each monk.

faces that day. Behind his [the new abbot's] back they were saying that we need these guns for our rights and now he has given them all away. Then the abbot had the *dobdos* each carry five or six guns and turn them over to the government."[65]

The Lhundrup Dzong incident began the final breach between Reting and Taktra, starting a two-and-a-half-year period of discord which culminated in the abortive coup d'état of Reting in 1947.

THE RETING-TAKTRA CONFLICT INTENSIFIES

Reting's trip to Lhasa and the defiant behavior of Reting's college in Sera monastery convinced Taktra that Reting and his followers posed a genuine threat to his position and to the stability of the government. Consequently, after the conclusion of the Lhundrup Dzong incident, Taktra took every opportunity to rid the government of close Reting supporters.

The first such action was the dismissal of Phünkang Jetrungla, a young monk official who was widely reputed to have been one of Reting's lovers. When Reting was in power, Jetrungla was his constant companion and consequently commanded the respect of others, although he did not hold a monk-official position. When Reting was about to retire, he appointed Jetrungla as an aide-de-camp in his secretariat, a position Jetrungla retained under the Taktra administration.[66] In October 1945, the Yigtsang Office transferred Jetrungla to the Tibetan government's Bureau Office in China. He did not wish to leave Lhasa and gave the excuse that he was sick. Taktra retaliated by dismissing him from government service.[67]

65. Ibid.

66. A commonly heard story asserts that because Jetrungla had become too old to continue as the ex-regent's lover he remained in Lhasa.

67. The dismissal order stated that when Jetrungla was appointed a monk official, he, like all monk officials, had signed an oath saying that he would serve wherever ordered; his refusal to go to China was therefore a serious breach (Anon1, interview). FO371/46123, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 21 October 1945, confirms the October 1945 date. Another British report from Lhasa states that Reting tried to intervene in the case to gain leniency for Phünkang but that this backfired and resulted in the punishment being increased from demotion to dismissal (FO371/53614, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 17 February 1946). This is highly unlikely.

Not long after the dismissal of Phünkang Jetrungla, Cogtray, another lay official very closely associated with Reting, ran afoul of Taktra. Reting had appointed Cogtray in 1939 to replace Kheme as *laja,* and it is widely accepted that Cogtray's wife (see Figure 37) had at one time been Reting's mistress. Reting and she had even exchanged a series of letters in which Reting asked her to leave her husband and live in Reting.[68]

On 22 January 1946, Cogtray's house was suddenly sealed and he was placed under house arrest in the Tsuglagang.[69] Cogtray had apparently drafted a letter requesting donations for Sera Che college on behalf of Ngawang Gyebo, the Sera Che Abbot, who had fled to China. This letter had been among the personal possessions of the abbot's manager, who had been killed in Kham. While the letter appeared innocuous, the evidence of a close connection between the ex–Sera Che Abbot and Cogtray, a close associate of Reting's, raised suspicion. Kapshöba took this opportunity to attack Cogtray; he was overheard commenting in the Kashag, "It is too dangerous, we cannot take the responsibility and must arrest and seal Cogtray now,"[70] implying that Cogtray's letter might be the tip of a conspiracy against the government. Once he made this insinuation, the other shapes had little choice but to detain Cogtray and investigate the matter and, particularly, to look for other incriminating evidence in his house. An investigating committee found no suspicious evidence in his house and Cogtray was soon released, but the experience frightened him. Soon after his release he resigned from government service, explaining that the situation had become too difficult for Reting's friends.[71]

The following Lhasa street song appeared just after Cogtray's arrest:

> Kapshöba, like the two-faced [hand-held] drum,
> has stirred up the soup-gruel.

68. Anon1 (interview) said these letters were among those publicly displayed in Lhasa after Reting's arrest in 1947.

69. IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 29 January 1946; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

70. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. Kapshöba was appointed shape in late 1945 to replace Bönshö, who had died of natural causes.

71. Ibid.

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71. Ibid.

house in Lhasa and an annual allowance in grain. Phünkang's wife an Geshela were both scheduled to receive a whipping, but the wif pleaded to be permitted to pay a fine instead, and this was accepted Phünkang Geshela was whipped.[75] The decree also ordered that Phün kang Shape be dismissed from the Kashag but be allowed to retain hi title of *kung*. Thus, another of Reting's key appointees and closest as sociates was eliminated for a relatively trivial reason.

In March 1947, just before the Reting coup attempt, yet anothe close Reting associate, the Chigyab Khembo Ngawang Tenzin, was dis missed from his position after the discovery of the theft of a smal amount from the Dalai Lama's treasury, over which he technically hel responsibility.[76] In the same incident two other pro-Reting officials Teiji Shankawa and Khencung Thubten Dawa, were also demoted.[77]

While the Taktra administration was removing supporters of Reting two openings appeared on the Kashag. The first occurred when Bönsh died in 1945. A scramble for that position ensued; Kapshöba, the offi cial who had earlier informed on Lungshar and worked closely wit Reting, won the post. Kapshöba had already switched his allegiance t Taktra and is said to have offered a tremendous bribe if he were give the appointment. A Lhasa street song derisively comments on his ap pointment and the new morality:

> 20,000 [*dotse*] slipped and fell,
> 30,000 banged its hip,
> without 50,000
> there is no way to become a shape.[78]

The song implies that gifts of 10,000 or 20,000 *dotse* (as some of th candidates are thought to have offered) did not suffice to obtain th position of shape; it took the 50,000 *dotse* Kapshöba offered.

The second opening in the Kashag resulted from the demotion o

75. Anon1, interview.

76. Ngawang Tenzin, however, was allowed to retain the position of ex-ecclesiasti Lord Chamberlain but was not given another portfolio.

77. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 93; also IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the Britis Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 13 April 1947.

78. In Tibetan: *Nyis khri 'dred brdar shor song / sum khri dpyi mgo brdabs shor song lnga khri tham pa med par / zhabs pad yong sa ma red.*

Phünkang. Taktra appointed Lhalu, Lungshar's son, as Phünkang's replacement. This prompted the following street song:

If you make Lhalu shape,
it will be very scary.
Instead of this if you appoint Sambo,
Pandatsang can put out hard cash.[79]

This song comments that it would be better to appoint Sambo as shape since Lhalu was "scary" (as the son of Lungshar) and Sambo could pay a large bribe because his son was married to one of the Pandatsang family, who were prominent traders.

The Surkhang, Shakabpa, Kapshöba, and Lhalu appointments reflect the political and ethical transformation that had occurred during Taktra's regency. Between late 1943 and 1946, the high ethics of Taktra had disintegrated. It had become common for all candidates for high positions to offer large bribes to the Regent's manager. Another Lhasa street song from this period captures this widespread feeling:

Taktra came to the throne and
upheld the virtuous laws,
[But] like the vows of a nun,
little by little they were lost.[80]

However, it is clear that offering money was not enough to succeed in the Taktra era: one also had to be anti-Reting. Only individuals who were thought to be strongly pro-Taktra were advanced to the highest positions.

THE TIBET IMPROVEMENT PARTY

While the attention of the Tibetan elite was focused on the escalating enmity between Taktra and Reting, another political threat emerged, in

79. In Tibetan: *Lha klu zhabs pad dngos na / a tsi a ma yod red / de la bsam pho dgos na / spom mda' hrag hrag yod red.*

80. In Tibetan: *Stag brag khri la 'khod song / tshul khrims srung ba'i gnang shag / a ni btsun ma'i sdom pa / ga ler ga ler shor song.*

the form of the Tibet Improvement Party.[81] Located mainly in the dian border towns of Kalimpong and Darjeeling, this group sought r simply a change in regents, but the "liberation of Tibet from the exi ing tyrannical Government" and the revolutionary restructuring of t Tibetan government and society.[82]

The Tibet Improvement Party was founded and led by Pandatsa Rapga, a somewhat idealistic Khamba nationalist and intellectual. included as its main members Canglocen Kung, Kumbela, and, l actively, the brilliant but dissolute monk, scholar, and rebel Gend Chömpel (see Figures 49 and 50).

Rapga was the younger brother of Yambe, a well-known Lhasa g ernment official from an economically separate branch of the Pand sang family. About forty-five years old in 1945, Rapga had spent m of his life in Kham and had been involved when Pandatsang Tobg another brother, had launched his abortive nationalist revolt against t Lhasa government in 1934. Rapga was a devout believer in the politi ideology of Sun Yat-Sen and had translated some of Sun's more imp tant writings into Tibetan.[83] Rapga wanted change to come to Tibet it had come to China following the overthrow of the Ch'ing dyna and was convinced that the present Tibetan government was hopeles ill-suited for the modern world. He took the ideals and theories of t Kuomintang as models for Tibet and looked to the Kuomintang help in creating an autonomous Tibetan Republic under the ove control of Republican China.

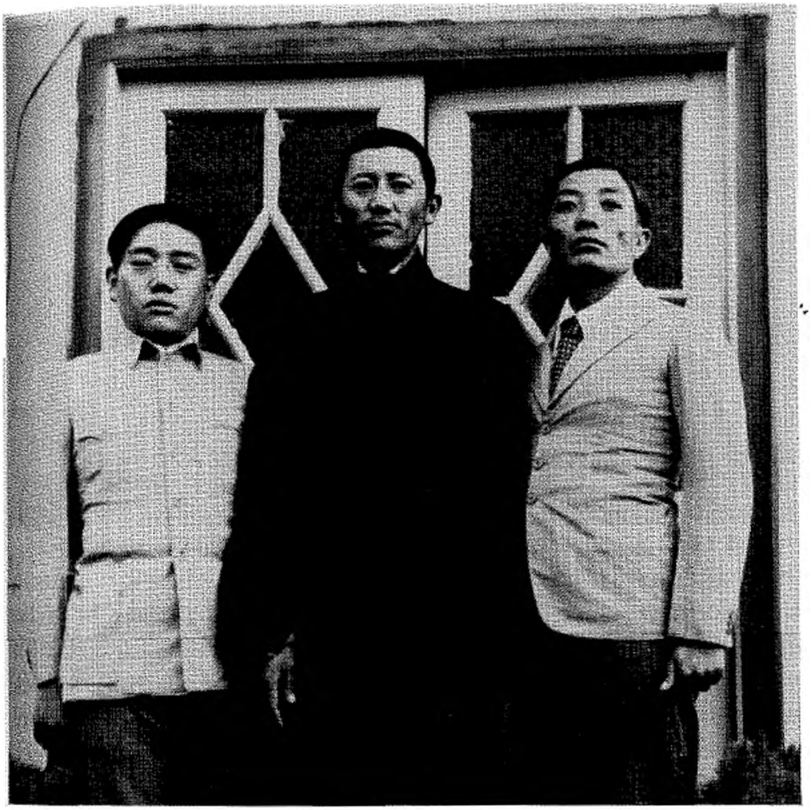
Rapga had gone to India from Kham in 1935, the year after t abortive Kham revolt, but he quickly returned to Chungking and tered the service of the Chinese government's Commission on Tibet and Mongolian Affairs. He started the Tibet Improvement Party in K impong in 1939, with Canglocen Kung and Kumbela.[84]

81. The group used the name Tibet Improvement Party in its English materials, the Tibetan (*nub bod legs bcos skyid sdug*) is more accurately translated as Western Ti Reform Party. The Chinese used on its letterheads translates even more strongly, as Tibet Revolutionary Party.

82. IOR, L/PS/12/4211, the "Concise Agreement of Tibet Improvement Party, K impong."

83. Rapga translated, for example, Sun Yat-sen's "Three Rights of the People" Tibetan: *don gsum ring lugs*).

84. IOR, L/PS/12/4211, "Concise Agreement of Tibet Improvement Party, Kal pong."

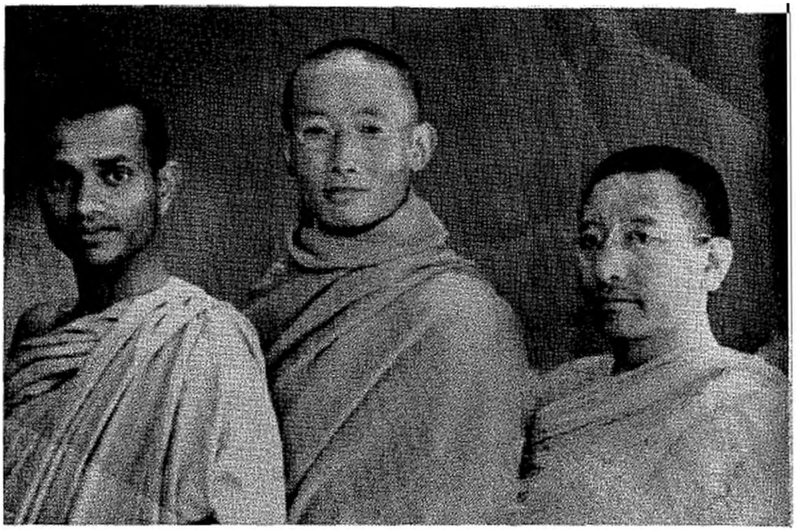


49.

Leaders of the Tibet Improvement Party:
(left to right) Ragpa, Kumbela, Canglocen

Kumbela and Canglocen had both been arrested and exiled to Kongpo after the 13th Dalai Lama's death in 1933 (see Chapters 5 and 6). While in exile they visited one another and soon developed a friendship. Both became embittered when they saw many other exiled and debarred political figures being allowed to rejoin the government, while they were not even permitted to return to Lhasa. In December 1937 they secretly fled to India.[85]

85. At the time of his flight, Canglocen Khung, well known as a poet, sent a letter to a friend in Lhasa that became a classic in Tibetan literature. It was memorized by lay



50.

Gendün Chömpel (center) in India

Rapga visited China for a few months in 1943, apparently to seek support for his party, and returned to India in September 1943 carrying an official Chinese passport. In 1944 and 1945, he received financial assistance from the Kuomintang and, with Canglocen and Kumbela, set about building the party in Kalimpong and, apparently, in Tibet as well.[86]

Gendün Chömpel, the fourth well-known member of the party, was

officials, one of whom remembered it as: "The false explanation in which Sherkarlingba Depön is [said] to be the father of young Lhalu who is Lungshar's child has been accepted, but our request, which was only to be allowed to return to our homeland, [has not], because a few of the principal lamas and lords cannot judge fairly [literally, not treat equally happiness and sadness, higher and lower]. [Thus] we have no choice but to secretly go for a while to sightsee and seek refuge in the capital of England though we are faultless. Because of this please do not have any regrets." (In Tibetan: *lung phrug lha sras skyes byed shel mdar brdzus pa'i rgyus rkyen gyis go phud / bdag tsho rang yul rkyang par log 'thus shig su'ang / mdzad gtso bla dpon re zung gis bde sdug sgang mi snyoms pa'i nyer len la brten pas re zhig yangs pa'i dbyin len rgyal sa'i grong 'khyer du ltad mo blta ba dang nag med bden skyabs zhu ba chabs cig tu gsang bskyod mi bya mthu med byung bas ma 'gyod pa 'tshal.*) (Sambo [Rimshi], interview.)

86. IOR, L/PS/12/4211, letter from Panda Rapga dated 17 June 1946.

an erudite but somewhat wild Amdo monk who had been born in 1905. After becoming a monk, he stayed at Tashikhil monastery in Amdo until he was twenty-two or twenty-three, when he enrolled in Gomang college, Lumbum khamtsen, in Drepung monastery. When he was about thirty he went to India for a stay of twelve years during which he learned English and Sanskrit and translated and composed a wide variety of texts.[87] While in India he became enamored of Marxist-Leninist political philosophy and anti-colonialist ideology and came to believe that major reforms or a revolution in Tibet was necessary.[88] He favored giving the monks salaries instead of estates and requiring them to study instead of engaging in business. He is also said to have favored land and legal reforms, and democracy.[89] For all his brilliance, however, Gendün Chömpel was hopelessly degenerate for a monk. He was a womanizer, a chain smoker, a user of opium and liquor, and physically unkempt.

Gendün Chömpel met Rapga, Canglocen, and Kumbela in Kalimpong and found they had much in common with him. Seeing themselves as advanced Tibetan intellectuals, they discussed the movement to oust the British from India and the need to bring about reforms in Tibet.[90] Gendün Chömpel became involved in the Tibet Improvement Party and in 1945 was asked by Rapga to travel through Bhutan and Tawang to Tibet, disguised as a monk-beggar making a pilgrimage but actually drawing maps of the country, particularly the northern border areas where Tibetans lived.[91] He performed this task and arrived in Lhasa sometime before 4 January 1946.[92]

Many Tibetans believe that Gendün Chömpel erred by sending the maps and notes to Rapga through the British-run postal service between Gyantse and India, instead of using a personal messenger, and

87. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. His main translations were the *Spyod 'jug chen po,* the *Chos kyi tshigs su bcad pa,* and, with N. Roerich, the *Blue Annals.* His main original works were the *Rgya gar gnas yik* and the *Deb ther dkar po.* He also adapted the Kama Sutra (*'Dod pa'i bstan bcos*) into Tibetan (Gelek [Rimpoche], interview).

88. Kirti sprul sku 1983: 23–24.

89. Ibid.: 273–74.

90. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

91. Lha 'dzoms sgrol dkar 1984: 147–48; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

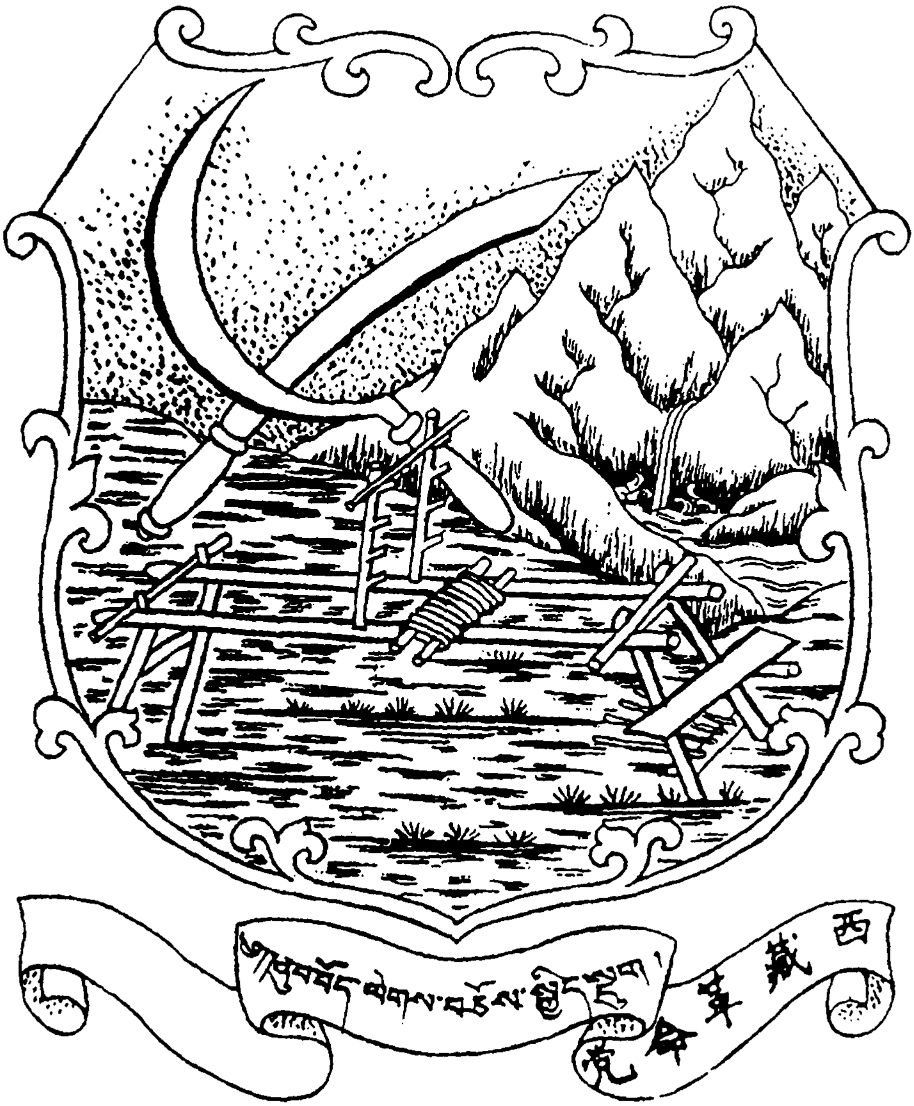
92. This is the date when the British first mentioned him in their weekly letter from Lhasa, IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 10 February 1946.

then compounded this error by using Rapga's well-known address at Reli View.[93] They contend that when British official H. E. Richardson (then in Gyantse) saw the address he became suspicious and opened the letter, finding the maps and notes indicating "Tibetan" areas. Richardson reported the discovery to the Kalimpong police, and plans were instituted in India to watch Rapga and his clique closely.[94] Richardson, however, recalled no such incident,[95] and the records in the British and British Indian archives make no mention of such a letter or maps.

Actually, the British appear to have developed an interest in Rapga when the Indian police discovered that he had ordered (in early February 1946) 4,000 copies of a membership form for his party and 2,000 copies of a membership card and an insignia that bore striking similarities to the Soviet Russian emblem (see Figures 51, 52, and 53).[96] One Tibetan official recalls that Basil Gould, the political officer in Sikkim, informally asked him at this time, "What is this Pandatsang Rapga doing in Kalimpong? How does he manage to live, since he is not engaged in any work?"[97] The British debated whether they should tell the Tibetan government about this political group. Gould's letter to the Foreign Affairs Office in Delhi in early April reflects their caution:

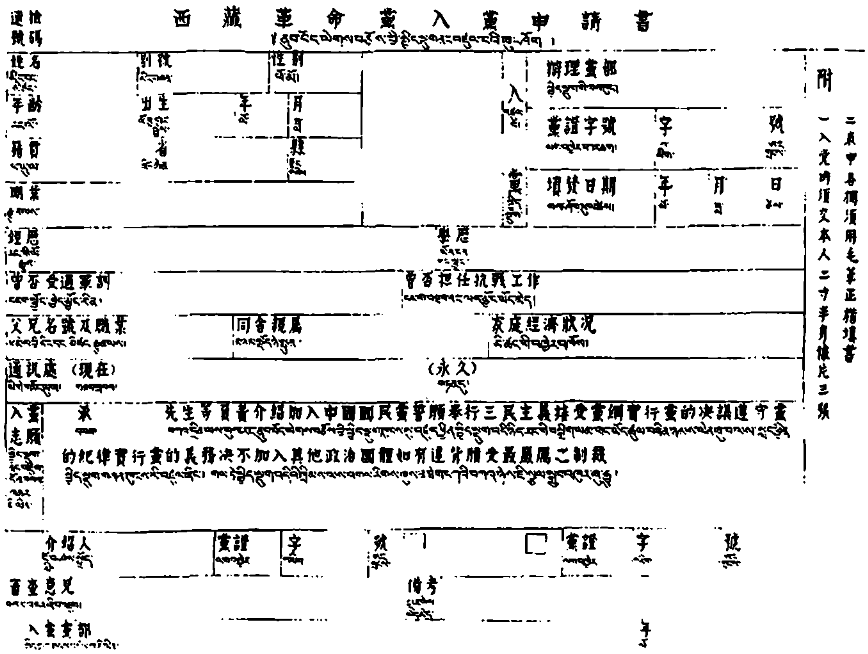
> My original idea had been that we should present the Tibetan Government with the whole case fully documented. But we have no guarantee that they will take any notice, and meanwhile the knowledge of our action will be common property. It seems best therefore to divulge the information gradually only, piece-meal, and be guided by their reactions as to the next step, e.g., Richardson could let the Tibetan Government know that document A has come into his hands, at the same time hinting willingness to divulge further information if but only if really wanted, keeping till the very last Document C [Rapga's own letter].[98]

93. Anon1, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
94. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
95. H. E. Richardson, interview.
96. IOR, L/PS/12/4211, letter from additional deputy-commissioner of police, Security Control, Calcutta, dated 4 April 1946.
97. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
98. IOR, L/PS/12/4211, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to Delhi, dated 3 April 1946. The affair was complicated because of the fact that Tobgye's brother Yambe was an influential pro-British official in Lhasa and it was not certain at that time whether he was also involved.



51.

Badge of the Tibet Improvement Party (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)



西藏革命黨入黨申請書

姓名 | 別號 | 性別 | 年齡 | 出生 | 籍貫 | 職業 | 住居 | 通訊處（現在） | （永久）

辦理黨部 | 黨證字號 | 填發日期 年 月 日

父兄名號及職業 | 同舍親屬 | 家庭經濟狀況 | 曾否担任抗戰工作

入黨志願：茲承 先生等願意介紹加入中國國民黨誓願奉行三民主義接受黨綱實行黨的決議遵守黨的紀律實行黨的義務決不加入其他政治團體如有違背願受最嚴厲之制裁

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52.

Application form of the Tibet Improvement Party (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

On 10 April, Richardson informed the Tibetan government of t existence of a Tibet Improvement Party but did not mention the nan of any individuals concerned. To Gould in Sikkim he wrote:

> Before receipt of your letter under reference I showed all the enclosures to your Express letter No. 7(11)-P/45 dated 30th March 1946, except the copy of Rapga's letter to Thacker Spink, to the Tibetan Foreign Bureau. . . . The Foreign Bureau's reactions were immediately to connect the documents with Rapga, and Surkhang said that he knew that Mr. Shen had given Rapga Rs. 14,000/—for the purchase of a printing press. The implications of the Soviet-type of emblem and of the word "Revolutionary" appearing in the translation of the Chinese version of the application forms and its absence from the Tibetan version did not escape them.
>
> At their request I provided them with copies of the documents which I showed them—and they said that they would put them up to the



ནུབ་བོད་ལེགས་བཅོས་སྐྱིད་སྡུག་ལག་འཁྱེར།

ཐོན་ཁུངས་ནུབ་བོད་ལེགས་བཅོས་སྐྱིད་སྡུག།

ཐོན་པའི་ རབ་ལོ་ ཟླ་ ཚེས།

རུས་མིང་ མི་ཚང་།

ཀ་མིག ཨང་གྲངས།

53.

Membership card of the Tibet Improvement Party (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

Kashag at once. I informed them that I could show them evidence that the moving spirit in the matter was Rapga if they wanted to see it. So far they have not asked me to do so.

I shall take steps to inform influential persons about the "Tibet Improvement Party" as you suggest in paragraph 5 of your letter under reference.[99]

On 26 April, two weeks after this disclosure, the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau thanked Richardson for the information and requested the Government of India to extradite Rapga to Tibet. Richardson said he would pass the request along but explained that it was unlikely to be approved since Rapga claimed Chinese nationality. Richardson himself recommended deportation to China on the grounds that Rapga was using India as a base for activity for China against the Tibetan government.[100]

On 19 June 1946, the British raided the houses of Rapga and six others who were suspected of spying, revolutionary activities, and counterfeiting Indian rupee notes.[101] The Chinese commissioner in Delhi had warned Rapga of the imminence of a raid, however, and all the documents relating to the party, particularly the membership lists, had been destroyed. But Rapga had overlooked certain letters in a suit pocket, and these were discovered by the police. The most important was a signed copy of the Tibet Improvement Party Agreement and several letters Rapga had written to the Chinese. They provide a window into the Rapga party:

Concise agreement of Tibet Improvement Party, Kalimpong. For the improvement and progress of Tibet we signed one detailed agreement in 1939. After that we passed four resolutions in Kalimpong when Mr. P. Rapga left for Chungking on 11 May 1943. Subsequently we submitted one application on 7.9.44 to Commissioner Tsung Lien Shen when he arrived Kalimpong. Thereafter one application dated 9.4.45 was submit-

99. IOR, L/PS/12/4211, memorandum no. 3(7)-L/46 from H. Richardson to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 14 April 1946.

100. FO371/53614, telegram from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 27 April 1946.

101. The others were Jampa Wosel, T. Borbora, Li Pei-thing, Sogpo Tama, Canglocen Kung, and F. M. Shen.

ted to him through Mr. Ma, ex-Chief Section of Lhasa Office. On 9th August 1945 we received [a message] through Chinese Consulate from Commissioner Tsung Lien Shen, saying Mr. Kumbila and Mr. Chang Lo Chen will receive maintenance allowance from July 1945. Also we might receive financial assistance for organization of Tibet Improvement Party. However whether we receive help or not we must strictly observe the following serial rules:

1. It is needless to say that we must act as per agreement of 1939, further we must translate into action principally the three principles of the People (San Min Chu I) and orders of the President Chiang. We must co-operate with the Principles and policy of the Central Government in all physical verbal and mental acts. We must never violate these.

2. Recently President Chiang has declared to allow autonomy of Tibet. According to this we must exert our efforts mainly for Liberation of Tibet from the existing tyrannical Government. Also we must act in the light of other progressive and democratic nations of the World and especially democratic Central Government of China for which all members of our party must work as men on the same boat.

3. Members of Tibet Improvement Party cannot go anywhere without consulting and obtaining sanction of the party.

4. We must co-operate with and assist those persons who have got sympathy with our party and we must pitch united front against those who are enemies to our party.

5. Members of Tibet Improvement Party living inside and outside Tibet must be linked up by the strong cord of ??? in matters relating to common interest. All other members of the Party must co-operatedly help such members who have suffered any harm of troubles for the sake of common interest.

6. We cannot make relation or talk with any Government or party without passing resolution. Individual members cannot do as they like.

7. For control of finance of the Party and for collection of finance the party must pass resolutions and accounts should be submitted monthly to the Controller of Accounts of the Party.

All members of Tibet Improvement Party must strictly observe the following short rules or discipline:

(1) To obey the regulations and principles of the Party.

(2) To allow free discussion on any problem concerning the Party but to obey absolutely once a resolution has been adopted.

(3) To keep Party secrets.

(4) To permit no attack on fellow members or Party organs before outsiders.

(5) Not to join any other political party.

(6) Not to organise cliques or factions.

Anyone violating the above rules is liable to one of the following punishments:

a. Warning.

b. Temporary suspension of membership privileges.

c. Temporary suspension of membership.

d. Or, expulsion from the Party.

[The Tibetan version was signed by Rapga, Canglocen, and Kumbela][102]

The Government of India issued deportation orders to Rapga, who then, as the following letter to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Office in China illustrates, tried to induce the Chinese to intervene on his behalf and persuade the Indian Government to rescind their order:

The Commission on Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs,
The National Government of China, Nanking, China.

Dear Sirs,

Most respectfully I beg to submit that I came to India in 1935 and in the same year I went to Chungking. Since 1936 I entered service under Commission on Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs. In 1936 I returned to India and all along I have been loyally and honourably serving our Government.

Before I left for China in 1943, houses and land in the name of my wife, we registered as joint property of my wife and myself in the Indian Court at Kalimpong. Then I visited Chungking in 1943 and stayed there for four months only.

I started from India in September 1943. In January 1944 I returned to India with a Chinese Official Passport. At that time the Inspector of Police of Kalimpong Thana indirectly told me "You apply and declare that you have got no connection with the Chinese Government and then we shall give up your registration." At that time I did not care for his remark and I have not budged an inch from rendering faithful service to our Central Government. Therefore my work and inspiration have been naturally growing against the British Government.

102. IOR, L/PS/12/4211, memorandum from the Central Intelligence Office, Kalimpong, dated 20 June 1946.

Recently the Government of India has notified to the Chinese Commissioner in New Delhi that my departure from India should be arranged within one month.

If I leave India as they demand, it is needless to say that I will lose my property and business and morale of the Tibetans of this side will be down. So, I request you through this to use your best influence immediately and urgently as my demand as below [*sic*]:

(1) I stay here as a Chinese Government employee under Chinese Government Passport as hithertofore. If this is impossible then

(2) I stay in Kalimpong according to the civil status of other Tibetans. If not,

(3) I should be given at least one year's time to make the necessary arrangements for my houses and land and the ample business spread under my control and for the treatment of my wife who is very much ill.

Reli View,
P.O. Kalimpong,
N. Bengal India.
The 17th June 1946.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(P. Rapga)
Commission on Mongolian
and Tibetan Affairs,
the National Government of
China, Nanking, CHINA

The Chinese were unable to persuade India to rescind the order. Rapga left for Shanghai on 22 July 1946. Kumbela was deported sometime after this, and it is said that Canglocen was saved from similar action only by the intervention of the Bhutan royal family, whose children he was tutoring.

These documents reveal that Rapga, Canglocen, and Kumbela were in the pay of the Chinese and that they wanted to overthrow the Tibetan government and institute a republic in Tibet that would be a part of the Chinese Republic. Several Tibetans who knew Gendün Chömpel have verified that he was in the pay of Rapga.[103]

Meanwhile, the Tibetan government in Lhasa had been keeping Gendün Chömpel under surveillance. Richardson reported to Gould:

103. Interview with former Lhasa magistrate Tashi Bera, in Kirti sprul sku 1983: 163. Tashi Bera relates a conversation with Gendün Chömpel in which the latter told him that Rapga was sending him 400 to 500 rupees a month, a substantial sum of money at that time. Sambo ([Rimshi], interview) says Gendün Chömpel told him he was receiving money from Rapga in India and that some of it came through his family.

> the Foreign Bureau know all about Chomphel La. They say he is always demanding interviews with the Shapes, decrying Tibetan Buddhism as corrupt, praising the "New Wisdom" (which seems to emanate from India), speaking in favor of Nazism and generally conducting himself in an eccentric way. For these reasons the Tibetan Government have had him watched. They say he is corresponding regularly with [Nicholas] Roerich [a Soviet Tibetologist].[104]

In late July the Tibetan government sent the two Lhasa magistrates to arrest Gendün Chömpel and confiscate his possessions. The magistrates were informed that the charges were very serious but were instructed to tell Gendün Chömpel only that the arrest pertained to the distribution of counterfeit money in Tibet.[105] Two aristocrat students of Gendün Chömpel, Horkhang Sey and Ragra Rimpoche, contacted their relatives in the Kashag to secure his release, but due to the political (but still secret) nature of his case, they were unsuccessful. Horkhang Sey recalled that when he spoke with Surkhang Shape about this, Surkhang gestured negatively to him and said, "Younger cousin, younger cousin, you shouldn't get involved in this," implying that it was something very dangerous.[106]

The results of the search of Gendün Chömpel's belongings were not illuminating. The government found only some figures on the number of troops, arms, and ammunition in the Tibetan army, notes on influential persons in Lhasa, and information on the border areas.[107] Nu-

104. FO371/53615, memorandum no. 7 (8)-P/46 from the political officer in Sikkim to the central intelligence officer in Shillong, dated 11 July 1946.

105. Interview with former Lhasa magistrate Tashi Bera, in Kirti sprul sku 1983: 142. He was one of the two magistrates who arrested Gendün Chömpel.

106. In Tibetan: *Ola, Ola, dindre nang gyu yawmare.* Horkhang (Sey), interview. Karmay (1985: 45) is incorrect when she says that Horkhang revealed "the threat made by Surkhang Sawang Chenmo in 1947, the then most powerful of the cabinet ministers. Surkhang told Horkhang that if any attempt were made at interfering in dGe- 'dun Chos- 'phel's [Gendün Chömpel's] condemnation, both the Horkhang and Tethong families would be wiped out to the very name." Horkhang's article in Tibetan does not say anything like this and his verbal account of his conversation with Surkhang, his close relative, clearly indicated that Surkhang was not "threatening" him but, rather, warning him that there were deeper issues that he could not reveal which would make this something Horkhang should not get involved in (Horkhang [Sey], interview).

107. Sambo (Rimshi), interview; interview with former Lhasa magistrate Tashi Bera, in Kirti sprul sku 1983: 158–59.

merous boxes contained notes and papers related to a history of Tibet Gandün Chömpel was writing.[108]

Gendün Chömpel was interrogated on numerous occasions and was once whipped. He was formally charged with forging money and was imprisoned, but the real reason was his involvement with the Tibet Improvement Party. Gendün Chömpel spent three years in prison, first at Shöl Office and then at Nangtseshar. He was finally released in 1951, with his khamtsen in Drepung monastery standing surety for him.

Coming on the heels of the Lhundrup Dzong incident, the revelation of a revolutionary pro-Chinese party that had gone so far as to print up thousands of membership cards and application forms unquestionably convinced the Kashag to act cautiously and incarcerate Gendün Chömpel. It is unclear to this day how wide the support for the Tibet Improvement Party may have been in Tibet, but knowledgeable Tibetan officials believe that there were at most a hundred or so sympathizers among Khamba traders. Such a small group might seem unimportant, but the possibility of an alliance between the Reting forces and Rapga's Kuomintang-backed party posed a real threat to the Lhasa government. As will be seen in the next chapter, in less than one year Reting's forces would indeed appeal for Kuomintang help and attempt to assassinate Taktra and take over the government.

108. The *White Annals* (in Tibetan: *Deb ther dkar po*). Sambo ([Rimshi], interview) reports that his wife once asked Gendün Chömpel after his release from prison whether it was true that they had found a life-sized female rubber doll in his house. Gendün Chömpel turned away and did not reply; this indicates, in Tibetan style, that it was true, since he did not deny it. Sambo was present on this occasion.

14

THE RETING CONSPIRACY

The anger and frustration felt by Reting and his advisors following their failure to regain the regency in 1944–1945 prompted them to consider overthrowing Taktra. Reting's inner circle in these machinations consisted of three figures, Nyungne Lama, Khardo Lama, and Reting Dzasa.[1]

Nyungne Lama was an incarnation from Shide Tratsang, Reting's monastery in Lhasa (see Figure 41). Born in 1887, a short man with a defective eye, he was intelligent and was skilled in Tibetan medicine as well as carving, painting, and repairing mechanical objects such as watches, cameras, phonographs, and guns. He was also worldly by Tibetan standards, having spent many years in Mongolia as a youth, including the period of their revolution.[2] After his return from Mongolia, the 13th Dalai Lama appointed him abbot of Reting's monastery of Shide. At this time he developed a close relationship with the young Reting, playing with and amusing him. When Reting became regent he placed Nyungne in charge of his labrang's secretariat, in effect giving

1. Cogtray, as was indicated in Chapter Thirteen, was another important member of Reting's inner coterie who advocated action.

2. 'Jam dpal rgyal mtshan (Reting Dzasa) and Thub bstan snyan grags 1986: 83–84 ('Jam dpal rgyal mtshan is pronounced Jampey Gyentsen). Gelek ([Rimpoche], interview) recalled that his father, Demo Rimpoche, was close to Reting and often told him that Nyungne talked about "democratic reforms and modernization," but there was no evidence of this influence during Reting's reign.

him control of the labrang's business affairs. In 1939, Nyungne's power in the labrang increased further when Reting simultaneously appointed him associate and advisor to Jampey Gyentsen, the new manager of Reting Labrang.[3]

Khardo Rimpoche, Reting's second important political advisor, was, like Reting, a Sera Che lama. Roughly the same age as Reting, they had become friends when they were students in Sera. The third and least important of the three was Reting Dzasa, Reting's nephew. In his early twenties in 1944, he had Reting's interests at heart, but was inexperienced.

After the Sera Che incident, Nyungne, Khardo, and Reting Dzasa repeatedly wrote to Reting from Lhasa urging him not to sit by while his friends and supporters were persecuted by Taktra.[4] Since there was no legal way to depose the current regent, the alternative they suggested was assassination. Nyungne and Khardo were convinced that with Taktra out of the way, their followers would be able to orchestrate a "spontaneous" movement to ask Reting to assume the regency. However, as will be discussed below, they also sought the support of the Nationalist government in China, a decision which turned out to be as disastrous a miscalculation as their choice of Taktra had been.

The main order of business, assassinating Taktra, was no easy task, for the regent rarely went out in public where he would be vulnerable. Nevertheless, the Reting conspirators determined several times when Taktra could be ambushed. One such time was on the evening of the fifteenth day of the first Tibetan month, when the Regent attended the Butter-Sculpture Festival in Lhasa to examine the displays. Other pos-

3. 'Jam dpal rgyal mtshan (Reting Dzasa) and Thub bstan snyan grags 1986: 84–85; Reting Dzasa, interview.

4. Thubten Thuwang, interview. Thubten Thuwang was a Sera Che *geshe* and incarnation whose information comes from his two nephews, both of whom held important positions with Reting. One of his nephews Ngawang Trinley, was a junior söpön (Reting's personal attendant), and the other, Chöntse Tenzin Gyatso, was a trusted personal favorite of Reting's. Chöntse gained Reting's trust when he volunteered to let Reting, who was fond of shooting, shoot an egg from the palm of his outstretched hand. Reting afterward asked him why he had volunteered when everyone else was afraid, and the young man replied, "I thought that even if I got shot and died, it would have been at the hands of a great Lama and I wouldn't have gone to hell. So I thought it was all right" (Thubten Thuwang, interview). Ngawang Trinley (interview) confirmed this.

sible times were when he traveled from Lhasa to his hermitage (Taktra Ritrü) and when he returned. In the first case, the attack could take place at night, and, in the second, it could happen outside the city.[5]

Reting was initially somewhat ambivalent about the prospects of a coup. Though bitter over what he saw as Taktra's betrayal, he was afraid of the consequences of an abortive attempt. In one letter to Nyungne and Khardo he advised them to do nothing precipitous, for "even if the *stupa* is turned upside down, the middle remains the middle," that is to say, even though Reting Labrang did not have the regentship, it still had great respect and influence.[6] Reting wanted to wait for a reply from China regarding their appeals for help instead of trying to kill Taktra.[7] In other letters, Reting said that if they continued with such activities they might one day have to flee to the northern nomad area, where not a single human being lived. But in the end, Reting succumbed to the urgings for action: he told Nyungne that he should do whatever he had to do, but carefully.[8] This gave Nyungne and the others the permission they needed, yet would later permit Reting to deny knowledge of the specific acts his staff had committed.

It appears that the plotters were not able to organize in time to ambush Taktra when he returned to Lhasa from his hermitage in late 1946, so they decided to strike with hand grenades on the evening of the Butter-Sculpture Festival in February 1947.[9] Two assassins were recruited to kill Taktra: Chöntse Gendün, who was a monk from Drepung, and a Triu Khamba.[10]

5. Thubten Thuwang, interview; Lha klu ([Lhalu] 1985: 14–15) and Ka shod ([Kapshöba] 1985: 50) report a letter from Nyungne to Reting proposing the second plan.

6. Anon1, interview; Shakabpa, interview. In Tibetan: *mchod rten mgo 'jug log nas / bang rim skyed pa.*

7. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 50.

8. Elements of this were mentioned by Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Shakabpa, interview; Lhalu, interview; Thubten Thuwang, interview; and Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 11–20.

9. The Butter-Sculpture Festival, known as Cöngachöpa, is part of the annual Great Prayer Festival (of the first Tibetan month), which was started by Tsongkhapa in the fourteenth century. On the evening of the full moon of that month, three- to four-story-tall butter sculptures are displayed on the Barkor route around the Tsuglagang Temple.

10. Thubten Thuwang's nephew, Chöntse Tenzin Gyatso, was present when the plotters were talking about this and later told Thubten that when he heard of the planned

When the regent went to inspect the butter sculptures, he was normally accompanied by the eight trungtsi and the four shapes. Shakabpa, one of the trungtsi at this time, recalled that he had no inkling of trouble and was preparing to meet Taktra and the others at the Tsuglagang Temple:

> Then I received a message suddenly. I think the message had come from Shöga Office [the regent's office] saying that the trungtsi should not come tonight as the regent is not going to attend the Butter-Sculpture Exhibition. I thought it was really strange why his visit was suddenly canceled. [I thought] that it was not possible for the trunyichemmo not to attend, for they have to read out the information for each of the butter sculptures. So I decided to go on my own as a spectator. I saw the shapes and all the trunyichemmo and some soldiers. That was all. The regent was not there.[11]

Taktra had obviously somehow gotten word of a possible attempt on his life.[12] However, he had no proof that a plot was afoot and could only wait and remain vigilant. Two Lhasa street songs of this period reflect the tense mood of the capital:

> The northern bearded goat
> should be clever [because]
> the ferocious tiger demon of the west
> wants to swallow him up.
>
> In a golden pan
> I have to pop some beans.

---

attack he immediately thought that his father would be attending and might get killed, but he was afraid to write to him not to come, for fear the plan would leak out (Thubten Thuwang, interview). This whole scheme was later revealed in the letters of Reting and his officials in Lhasa, many of them in Reting's own handwriting on his distinctive yellow stationery in the green ink he used. These were exhibited, under glass, on the streets of Lhasa and are therefore widely known to officials.

11. Shakabpa, interview.

12. Thubten Thuwang (interview) claimed that Kapshöba, one of the four shapes, may have warned Taktra, because Kapshöba was close to Reting and his advisors and was fully aware of the plot. He claimed to know this because his nephew Chöntse Tenzin Gyatso, a servant of Reting's, told him that Kapshöba was present when Nyungne and Khardo were discussing assassination attempts. This is unlikely, however, for if Kapshöba had said this openly, Taktra would have had proof of the plot and would have acted.

I don't need much firewood,
poplars from Reting will suffice.[13]

These songs cleverly sum up one aspect of the current political atmosphere by warning Reting (the goat in the first song) that Taktra (the tiger) is waiting for an opportunity to do him in.

Taktra's failure to appear at the festival meant that Nyungne and the other plotters would have to wait several months. The next opportunity to ambush Taktra would be when he left Lhasa after the Tshongcö Prayer Festival in mid-April. Having finally decided to act, they were impatient of delay. They decided to kill Taktra by an indirect method—a parcel bomb.[14] Nyungne Lama created a bomb composed of a box and a hand grenade. After the pin of the hand grenade was pulled out, the lever that triggered the grenade was held in place by the sliding cover of the box. When the box was opened by sliding back the cover, the lever was activated and the grenade exploded (see Figure 54).[15]

The plotters initially sent a Reting servant named Chöntse Tenzin, and Lobsang Namgye, a Khamba servant of the Gyagpöntsang family (who were close to Reting), to Taktra's manager with the bomb parcel, which was labeled "A secret report from the governor of Kham, Dzasa Yuthok, to the Regent." When they saw many people talking with the manager, however, they left without delivering the bomb. The plotters then decided to send the bomb to Taktra via Gyambumgang (Ngawang Namgyel), the powerful trunyichemmo who was an inner-circle advisor of Taktra's.[16] Lobsang Namgyel took the small package to Gyambumgang's house early one morning toward the end of February.[17] The only person awake at the time was a thirteen-year-old kitchen servant named Guru, who informed Lobsang that his master was not yet awake, but took the package. Lobsang, pretending to be the servant of a wealthy

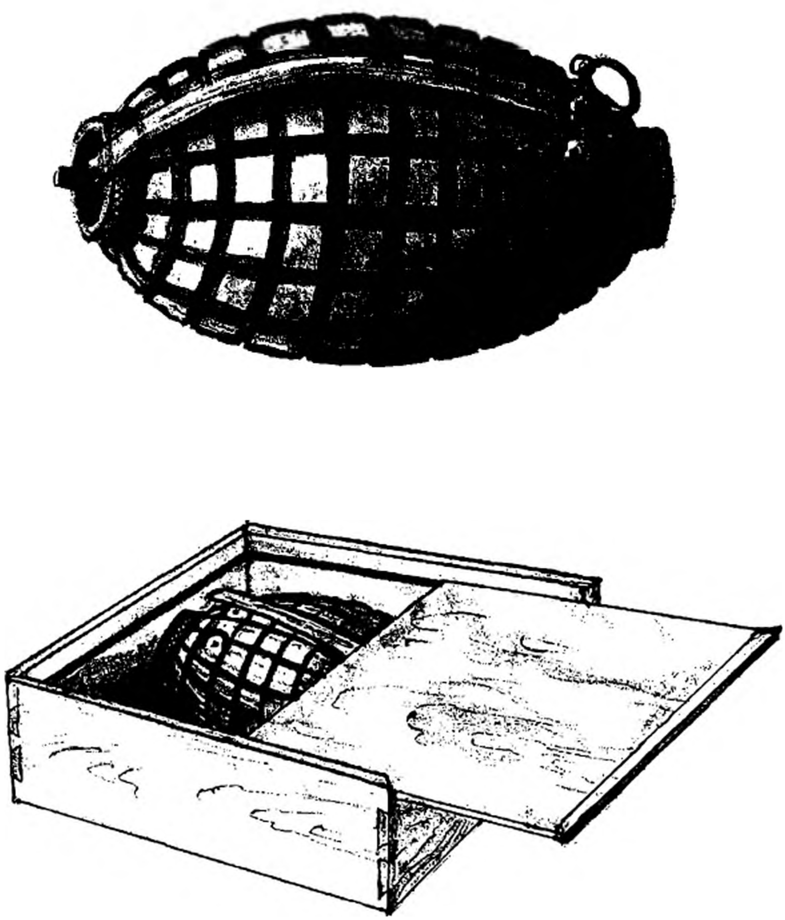
13. In Tibetan: *byang gi ra pho rgya bo / cang grung ma byas zer na / nub gyi stag 'dre ngar nas / khur mig gtong nying 'dod shag. gser gyi slang nga'i nang la / rgya sran yos cig brnga dgos / me shing mang po mi dgos / rwa sgreng shug pas 'grig ga.*

14. Reting Dzasa (interview) indicated that he was also trying to devise a plan to assassinate Taktra Dzasa, the real power behind Taktra.

15. J. Taring, interview.

16. 'Jam dpal rgyal mtshan (Reting Dzasa) and Thub bstan snyan grags 1986: 91.

17. Ibid. Ngawang Trinley (interview) confirms that the Khamba was Lobsang Namgyel, and said that Lobsang was killed during the massacre of the government's troops at Reting.



54.

Sketch of parcel bomb

Khamba trader, said his master would come later, and left. The boy put the package aside and later gave it to Gyambumgang's manager with the message that the Khamba trader who had sent it would come soon. The manager, in turn, did not consider it urgent, but put it in a drawer in his quarters until the main trader came. He did not mention the parcel to Gyambumgang.[18]

When several weeks had passed with no explosion, the Reting plot-

18. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 22–23.· Trinley Dorje, interview, as told to him by Gyambumgang's steward.

ters assumed that the package had not been given to Taktra, and, not knowing why, tried to precipitate action by throwing into Taktra's residence an anonymous, rolled-up letter that said, "Dzasa Yuthok has sent a very important letter to the Regent Taktra through Trunyichemmo Ngawang Namgyel [Gyambumgang]. However, it is understood that the trunyichemmo has not handed over the letter as yet. This raises doubts about the trunyichemmo's loyalty to the government."[19] This note was turned over to Taktra's manager, who considered it a crude attempt to sow discord among allies and told his servants to ignore it.[20]

In the meantime, Gyambumgang's nephew, Gendün, became curious about the heavy package. Thinking that there must be something valuable in it, he secretly took it to his room and proceeded to unwrap it carefully so that it could be rewrapped unnoticeably. As he began to open the cover, it made a hissing noise. He immediately dropped the box and fled, barely escaping the room when the package exploded, breaking the glass windows and damaging the interior of the room. Gyambumgang took the debris of the explosion to the Kashag, with a letter explaining what had happened.[21]

The Kashag notified the regent and disclosed the bomb incident to the Lhasa public, ordering them to search for the person who had delivered the parcel. Everyone who owned a house had to give a guarantee that he was not providing shelter to such a person, and even those who were renting apartments were asked to give written guarantees that they harbored no such Khamba.[22]

19. Anon1, interview; Gyentsen Tempel, interview. Gyentsen Tempel was the younger monk-official from Gyambumgang's household.

20. Gyentsen Tempel, interview; Trinley Dorje, interview, as told to him by Gyambumgang's steward. The delay in passing on such a letter or parcel addressed to the regent from the commissioner of Kham has led a number of Tibetans to speculate whether the entire bomb plot was engineered by the government, but this does not seem possible. Later evidence revealed that Reting Labrang in Lhasa had other hand grenades and boxes similar to those used in the attack (this is explained below), and the source of Reting's grenades was later identified with certainty. Moreover, as was seen above, Reting Dzasa has now admitted this ('Jam dpal rgyal mtshan [Reting Dzasa] and Thub bstan snyan grags 1986: 91). All of this makes it seem likely that the delay was due simply to an oversight. The parcel was set aside on the assumption that the Khamba trader would soon arrive in person; since he never arrived, it was forgotten.

21. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 22–23; Gyentsen Tempel, interview.

22. Anon1, interview.

Taktra received no leads, however, and did nothing for another two or three weeks. Then, on the twenty-third of the second Tibetan month (14 April 1947), he suddenly struck back at Reting.

RETING AND THE KUOMINTANG

Reting and his advisors had been seeking military and political assistance from the Nationalist Chinese government in their attempt to regain power. As early as 1945, they had contacts with Kuomintang secret agents and with the Kuomintang representative in Lhasa. Reting told them that Taktra stood in the way of friendly relations between Tibet and China, and the Chinese reciprocated by expressing interest in Reting's return to the regency.[23] Nyungne Lama then prepared petitions requesting the Chinese government to assist Reting to achieve this end, assuring the Chinese that there would be no break in harmonious relations between China and Tibet when Reting was again regent, and that Reting would serve China gratefully.[24] Several such communications were sent to China via the Kuomintang representative in Lhasa.[25]

China responded by inviting Reting to participate in the National Constitutional Assembly Meeting that was to be held in Nanking in 1946. Reting could not, of course, do this but he asked two close associates, Khambas Gyagpönphu Döndrub and Lagaphu Thutob, both delegates from the Kanze area in Chinese-administered Kham, to act secretly as his substitute in China. He instructed them to tell the Chinese government again that Taktra was pro-British and to try to procure China's assistance in regaining the regency.[26] He also expressed this in letters he sent with them.[27] Nothing, however, came of this approach,

23. 'Jam dpal rgyal mtshan (Reting Dzasa) and Thub bstan snyan grags 1986: 89–90.
24. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 18–19.
25. Ye shes tshul khrims 1986: 64.
26. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 13–14. The National Constitutional Assembly Meeting is discussed in Chapter 15.
27. Ye shes tshul khrims (1986: 65) says he prepared one such letter.

because Chiang Kai-shek was at this time in the process of negotiatin with the Taktra government.[28]

Further evidence of Reting's appeal to China for aid derives fror the account by Pebola, one of the monk officials guarding Reting i prison in 1947. Reting told Pebola:

> Taktra and I had a relationship of teacher and student. Moreover, since Taktra's labrang was poor at that time, to enrich his labrang I agreed to resign and let Taktra become the regent for awhile on the condition that he return the regency to me after a few years. But let alone handing back the regency, Taktra always indulged in antagonizing and injuring my labrang. Thus there was always confrontation between us. The aristocrats in both the Yigtsang and the Kashag tried to damage Reting Labrang as much as they could. Therefore, I sent the Khamba traders Gyagpönphu and Lagaphu to China to seek Chiang Kai-shek's help to regain the regency of Tibet for me. However, I did not receive any concrete response.[29]

The appeal Reting made to the Chinese was discussed in a numbe of letters exchanged between Reting and his advisors in Lhasa, an between them and China, which were confiscated and later publicl displayed in Lhasa by the Tibetan government. In one letter to his la brang's officials in Lhasa, Reting wrote:

> You should be especially alert and clever for regardless of whether China has ordered [the Kashag to reinstate me], if Tibet doesn't listen and if planes, etc., aren't sent [by China] at once, because we have sided with the Chinese government, our complete destruction is certain. . . [Also] if we don't send repeated clear telegrams [to China] saying "Later, at the time our goal is achieved, we shall hold dear the kindness of the Chinese government and serve it," then they may delay acting on our behalf be-

28. This is examined in Chapter 15.

29. In Tibetan: *'on kyang stag brag gis nga la rgyal tshab phyir sprod byed rgyu pha bzhag rwa sgreng bla brang la 'khon 'dzin gnod 'tshe kho na byas byung / der brten nga gny 'gal zla gyur pa red / bka' shag dang / yig tshang gi gtso bo chos mchod pa'i stag brag gi rj 'brang sku drag tshos rwa blar gnod 'tshe gang thub byed kyi 'dug / der brten ngas khams tshon brgya dpon tshang dang / la kha tshang gi bu gnyis rgya nag la btang ste cang ce hrer bod k rgyal tshab nga rang la rang 'jags yong ba'i zhi drag gang 'os kyi rogs ram gnang rogs zhu ba btang ba yin / 'on kyang phyir lan 'jog bzo thon pa gang yang ma byung zhes.* (Shar rts [Pebola] 1983: 115–16.)

cause China is a big country and has much work that is never finished. And if China delays, it is not certain what those evil officials [Taktra and his advisors] will do.[30]

On 14 April 1947 (the twenty-third day of the second Tibetan month), an ultra-secret coded telegram was received in Lhasa from the Tibet Bureau Office in Nanking that opened with the unusual instruction that no one beneath the rank of shape was to read it.[31] The government telegraph officer immediately took the telegram and the code book to the Kashag, where the shapes slowly unraveled the message. To their astonishment and alarm, it revealed that Reting had just sent an urgent message through Gyagpönphu and Lagaphu requesting Chinese troops, military equipment, and airplanes to help him overthrow Taktra.[32] Reting's message apparently offered to accept Chinese overlordship and, some say, to cede to China contested Tibetan territory in Kham.[33] The telegram also said that China had agreed to respond to Reting's urgent request within *five days*.[34] This telegram proved to the Kashag and the regent not only that Reting and his advisors were planning a revolt but that the political status of Tibet itself was threatened: if Reting regained power through Chinese military force, Tibet would unquestionably become subordinate to China. Reting's appeal for military support from China represented an extraordinarily dangerous escalation of the Reting-Taktra hostility.

Kapshöba and Lhalu (both were shapes at that time) have written

30. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 18–19. In Tibetan the critical phrase is: *rjes sor don son mchis mtshan rgya gzhung chen po'i bka' drin snying bcang gis zhabs 'degs sgrub chog*. This indicates clearly that if Reting regained power he would repay China's kindness. These letters apparently still exist in the Archive Office in Lhasa, but have not been released for research.

31. The head of the bureau at this time was the monk official Thubten Sangbo.

32. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 25; Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 43. Thubten Thuwang (interview) recalled a later discussion with his student Thubten Sangbo, the head of the Bureau Office in Nanking at that time. Thubten Sangbo told him that he was the one who had found out about Reting's appeal and had sent the telegram to Lhasa. Thubten Sangbo told him further that it is absolutely certain that Reting had approached the Chinese government for aid to come back to power. When Thubten Thuwang, who was staunchly pro-Reting, demurred, Thubten Sangbo told him, "You are my teacher and know religion but with regard to politics you don't know the real situation."

33. Anon1, interview.

34. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 25.

that it was H. E. Richardson, the head of the British Mission in Lhas who first brought Reting's request to the Chinese to the attention the regent. Kapshöba wrote:

> In the second Tibetan month [March] Richardson . . . went straight to the regent to secretly inform him that Reting had sent two representatives [Gyagpönphu and Lagaphu] to Nanking at the time of the Chinese National Constitutional Assembly and these were treated with more respect than the Tibetan government's representatives. . Moreover, after the assembly meeting was over, they stayed in Nanking and conveyed to the Chinese government Reting's message that he accepts that Tibet is not independent and is a part of China. Moreover, he asked for help, saying that China should send Chinese troops to Tibet as well as weapons and money to Tibet and should order the Tibetan government to reinstate Reting as regent. He also said that China had decided to send many troops as well as many planes which would bomb Lhasa. Richardson said that this might occur any day and was a great danger. He also said that the Chinese had given Gyagpönphu guns and much money and that Reting and Tashilhunpo had allied and were making Sera their military base. They and their cohorts were planning to have an uprising in Lhasa and, using Tashilhunpo monastery as a military base, also in Shigatse.[35]

Kapshöba wrote that when Taktra received this information he secret informed the shapes of what Richardson had said; they, in turn, sent secret message to the Tibetan Bureau Office in Nanking asking them investigate.[36]

Kapshöba's presentation of events is incorrect. Richardson did me with the regent when the Victory Congratulations Mission was i China and did warn the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau about the Mi sion being duped by the Chinese. This was in 1946, however, not i 1947. There is no indication, direct or indirect, in the British and Bri ish Indian records that Richardson or Delhi had any knowledge of Re

35. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 40–42. Lha klu's ([Lhalu] 1985: 21) report similar, but he did not specify what Reting had said to the Chinese government or wh his plans were for an uprising in Tibet. He wrote only: "At that time [Reting] said ma urgent and important things regarding the Tibetan question." (*deng skabs bod don skor g che dza drag gi skad cha mang tsam yod lugs bshad pa red*).

36. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 41.

ing's appeal to the Chinese for military support either before or after this event. Richardson, moreover, categorically denies having had any such information: "I never had any political discussion with the Taktra Regent and certainly never gave him any secret information. I was officially entertained by him on 3rd March [1946]. He was not well and after exchanging scarves he left and the Nendrön [aide-de-camp] looked after us. I had no meeting with the Kashag until they invited me, after the [Reting] trouble was over, to put their case, on 12th May [1947]. . . I had no knowledge of the trouble until it suddenly blew up on 14th April."[37] Kapshöba and Lhalu have apparently confused Richardson's earlier approaches concerning the Victory Congratulations Mission with the later cable from China.[38]

In actuality, it was Kumbela who informed Thubten Sangbo, the Tibetan government's representative in China, of Reting's appeal. His motivation for this derives from events that occurred in India just before his deportation. After his escape to India from exile in Kongpo, Kumbela began working for Reting Labrang's trading company in Kalimpong. In 1946 he apparently made substantial purchases in Bombay on his own authority, for which he was not reimbursed when the venture lost money. Kumbela quit the firm in anger, but, virtually penniless just before his deportation to China, he made one last attempt to obtain reimbursement. Although Reting Labrang was phenomenally wealthy, it again refused to pay, and Kumbela is said to have sworn vengeance.[39] This animus was exacerbated by the difficult time Kumbela had at first in Nanking. Ultimately he gained employment with the Mongolian and Tibetan Office and through it met Gyagpönphu, who, while smoking opium with Kumbela, told him of Reting's proposal to the Chinese. Kumbela immediately saw his chance for revenge and contacted Thubten Sangbo.[40]

37. H. E. Richardson, personal communication dated 3 April 1986.
38. Lhalu, interview.
39. Ibid. The British records also mention that Kumbela quit or was fired in a dispute over money (IOR, L/PS/12/4211, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, Delhi, dated 17 July 1946.)
40. Lhalu, interview; Sambo ([Rimshi], interview) reports that Kumbela himself told him about this one day when they were smoking opium in Lhasa. Kumbela, not surprisingly, was permitted to return to Tibet soon after the Reting affair ended; he ar-

THE SEARCH FOR RETING

After each shape had read the coded telegram, they discussed the matter at length but did not suggest what course of action should be pursued. Finally, Surkhang stated that they had no choice but to bring Reting to Lhasa, that is, under arrest. The others at once agreed and decided that a shape should go to Reting with the troops.[41]

When they explained the situation to Taktra, his eyes filled with tears, but he agreed to Reting's arrest, first appointing Surkhang to perform that duty, then, in view of the danger and unpopularity of the task, appointing Lhalu to accompany him. Surkhang and Lhalu, fearing that if they delayed for even a day word would leak out, left that same night. Surkhang, Lhalu, and the two commanders-in-chief met at the Trapchi army garrison, about a mile and a half north of Lhasa, to organize the escort. The Ü Garrison commander, Shukoba, was also present, as was the governor of Northern Tibet, Rimshi Shakabpa. The two shapes explained to the military officers that they were going to arrest Reting and instructed them not to tell the troops their destination. They sent Rimshi Shakabpa with a squad to the Phembo Gola pass to stop all traffic going north. At about 11 P.M., Surkhang, Lhalu, Commander-in-Chief Kesang Tsultrim, Shukoba, two Trapchi rupöns, and about 200 troops left Trapchi for Reting.[42]

One soldier recalls that evening:

> I was sleeping in the barracks when suddenly I heard a bugle call summoning all the high NCOs. Then another bugle called all the lower NCOs. I knew that something very serious must have happened and got up to look outside. I saw the entire courtyard of the garrison filled with horses and mules. I wasn't aware at this time that the two shapes were there. The talk was that 400 soldiers led by the Rupön Kesang had to leave at once. . . . We were told that the purpose of our mission was to

rived in Lhasa on 1 November 1948, and the Tibetan government provided him with an annual salary and a house.

41. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 25–28. The four Shapes at this time were: Ramba (Thubten Künkyen), Surkhang (Wangchen Gelek), Kapshöba (Chögyey Nyima) and Lhalu (Tsewang Dorje).

42. Ibid.

capture Kapshöba Shape, who had run away with some important things.[43]

At about 9 P.M. the following evening, the shapes reached Talung and decided to spend the night. However, at about 1 A.M., sentries posted on the main road awakened the shapes with the news that they had spotted several suspicious riders moving toward Reting.[44] The riders, in fact, had been sent from Lhasa to warn Reting to flee. Reting and his advisors had frequently discussed the possibility of the government suddenly arresting Reting, and Reting was prepared on short notice to flee to China via the northern route.[45] Nyungne and Khardo had advised Reting that it would be safer for him if he left Tibet at this time, but Reting was worried that the northern route would be too cold for his small son Panam,[46] and he was reluctant to commit himself any sooner than necessary to what might be a lifetime in exile.

Reting's officials in Lhasa had found out about the government's plan when a headman from a nearby estate of Reting's came to Lhasa to tell them that a group of soldiers had headed north over the Phembo Gola pass, apparently in search of Kapshöba. Reting's officials were immediately suspicious, but decided to find out from their friends in the government whether Kapshöba had left before they sent a message to Reting to flee to China. They soon ascertained that Kapshöba was in Lhasa, but neither Surkhang nor Lhalu was to be seen anywhere. They then sent to warn Reting those riders that were seen by the sentry.[47]

After being awakened at Talung, Surkhang and Lhalu decided to leave immediately for Reting. One group of fifty troops under the ru-

43. Tashi Döndrup, interview.
44. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 30.
45. Reting himself preferred the India route and had already alerted his representatives in Kalimpong to be ready, but H. E. Richardson, the British official in Lhasa, refused to grant him a visa without the Kashag's permission, so this option was dropped. Köncho Samden, a Drigung Labrang official whose family was very close to Reting, recalled that some months before Reting's arrest, Reting told him that he might have to flee suddenly to China and asked if Köncho wanted to join his party. When the official said yes, Reting told him to be packed to leave as soon as he received a message. (Köncho Samden, interview.)
46. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 16–20; Lhalu (interview). As was indicated earlier, Reting was polyandrously sharing his half-brother's wife. This letter was later displayed publicly by the Tibetan government. (Sambo [Rimshi], interview; Lhalu, interview.)
47. Reting Dzasa, interview.

pön Anadawa was sent to Reting monastery to insure that the mon did not try to interfere. Kesang, the rupön of the fourth unit, was ch sen to go with fifty soldiers directly to Reting's residence, because l knew Reting well and would not arouse suspicion. He was accomp nied by Gyagpön Kesang, an officer very close to Taktra, who was see that all went according to plan.[48] The shapes and the remainir troops were to remain behind until all was secure.[49]

While the main force was moving toward Reting, the three ride were again sighted. Surkhang and Lhalu decided not to open fire c them unless they headed toward the upper valley, since by that rou they could reach Reting ahead of the troops. The riders apparently r alized this and saved their lives by heading toward the lower valle They still tried to warn Reting by sending messages through loc people, but they themselves fled straight to China. The messag reached Reting too late.[50]

Meanwhile, in Lhasa on the morning after the arrival of the Nankir telegram, the other two shapes, Ramba and Kapshöba, implement the plan to arrest Reting's main advisors. A Kashag aide-de-camp r calls that morning:

> No, we didn't know or guess anything like that was happening [Surkhang and Lhalu leaving for Reting]. Let alone we ADCs, even the Kashag secretaries[Kadrung] were in the dark. Nobody knew where the shapes had gone. When we asked, someone said that because the Dalai Lama was about to go to Drepung monastery the two shapes had gone to inspect the roads for the journey. Then we noticed that the trungtsi were in a rush to meet with the Kashag, and we began to suspect that something was amiss. We started looking at each other and asking what was going on.[51]

Shakabpa, who was a tsipön at the time (see Figure 55), remembe that eventful day:

48. Ngawang Trinley, interview; Lhalu, interview.
49. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 30.
50. There are unconfirmed rumors that Yeshe Tsultrim, the leader of the ride either fell asleep or drank too much barley beer at one spot and that is why he was unab to reach Reting before the government forces. This seems highly unlikely.
51. Tsarong, interview.



55.

Four tsipöns: (left to right) Shakabpa, Ngabö, Lukhang, Namseling (ca. 1945) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

We were giving a *digyu* test for new candidates who wanted to become lay officials. Because of this, we had been at the Tsigang since early morning and were more dressed up than usual. Suddenly, the aide-de-camp to Ramba Shape came to the Tsigang and told us that all the trungtsi were required to go to the Kashag immediately for a very important meeting. We talked among ourselves [the four tsipöns], wondering what could be the reason for such an extraordinary order, for under normal circumstances such a message would have come from the Shöga office. We went to the Kashag and found only Kapshöba and Ramba there.

We were told to wait in the Tseja Treasury Office until the other two shapes came. We waited and waited but every time we inquired about them we were told the other two shapes still hadn't arrived. We talked among ourselves and speculated why they had called us to come for a meeting so early in the morning and then made us wait for so long. Whenever we would inquire about this, the reply was that all the shapes weren't there. After a long time the Kashag ADCs, who still did not know what was really happening, finally told us that Lhalu had taken leave that day and Surkhang had gone to Gempö Utse near Drepung to check the road for the forthcoming visit of the Dalai Lama to Drepung. We then went in and met the two remaining shapes.

After we entered, the shapes closed the door, indicating that all appeals, messages, etc., should not be brought in. There were to be no interruptions. The Chigyab Khembo was present with the two shapes. We sat down; they told us they had received a telegram from the Nanking Bureau Office [of the Tibetan government]. . . . In that telegram it was mentioned that Reting had sent people to Nanking and was seeking support from Chiang Kai-shek, saying that the Taktra administration was no good, etc. Then the two shapes said, "this is a very serious and dangerous situation. The regent has been informed and Lhalu and Surkhang have left to "invite" Reting to return to Lhasa. You all now have to go and seal the property of the other involved people [and arrest them]."

We were all shocked to hear this and asked, "What will happen when we go to seal Reting Labrang [in Lhasa] and what should we do if there is trouble." At this time there was a loud knocking on the door of the Kashag Office. Someone said, "Get up and open the door," and I think Tsipön Namseling opened it. The knocking was the regent's ADC, so we placed a small cushion for him to sit on and asked him what was the matter. He said that while watching Reting's house through a telescope they saw four armed people leave Reting and head off via the Dode Valley [toward Reting monastery via Phembo Gola pass]. He said, "It may be that they are trying to catch the shapes or to get to Reting monastery ahead of them and warn the ex-regent so it would be a good idea to send some soldiers to catch up with them and stop them." The shapes sent an ADC to call the commander-in-chief, Ragashar, who was instructed to send soldiers at once to bring those riders back. . . . This discussion in the Kashag took about one or two hours.[52]

52. Shakabpa, interview. He is the brother of Shakabpa Rimshi, the governor of Northern Tibet, who accompanied Lhalu and Surkhang. *Digyu* is the traditional Tibeta

The Trungtsigye then decided that because of the sensitivity of the task, they would include in the sealing party representatives from the Dalai Lama's Office, the Regent's Office, and the Kashag. Fearing that Reting's associates might try to stop them, they also ordered the Trapchi Regiment to send troops to meet them at Reting Labrang in Lhasa (see Map 3). The arresting officials divided into two groups in order to appear less conspicuous as they walked toward Reting; one group left from the northern gate of Shöl, and one group from the barracks of the Potala.[53] One official recalls:

> When the sealing party arrived at Reting, the soldiers hadn't yet gotten there. Since the officials could not just stand around aimlessly waiting for the soldiers, they entered the courtyard. At this point, one of the officials suggested that it would be safer if they weren't all bunched together, so the group spread out and crossed the courtyard in single file. One member of the party recalls that he thought that "if anyone had opened fire with a shotgun at that time not a single person would have survived. But nothing happened."[54]

In the meantime, Nyungne Lama, Khardo Rimpoche, Reting Dzasa, and the Reting ex-dzasa discussed their plan of action in the event the government came to arrest them. Nyungne suggested shooting down the trungtsi party once they came into the Reting Labrang courtyard. The Reting officials had pistols, rifles, and apparently even a few Bren guns and could have done this easily. The old Reting ex-dzasa, however, adamantly objected, saying that such an action would lead to all-out war and the total destruction of Reting Labrang, as had happened to Tengyeling monastery three decades earlier. Nyungne Lama objected to a meek surrender; he proposed that they invite the government officials into a room and then detonate a hand grenade, killing both the officials and themselves. Again the ex-dzasa objected, as did Reting Dzasa himself. Having reached no consensus, each went his own way.[55] Reting Dzasa walked over to the house of the Dalai Lama's

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system of making arithmetic calculations. It involves manipulating various kinds of materials such as rocks, sticks, and threads to add and subtract.

53. Ibid.
54. Anon1, interview.
55. Ngawang Trinley, interview.

family (which was next to Reting Labrang) to tell the Dalai Lama's mother that whatever happened, Reting had never meant harm to the Dalai Lama or his position.[56]

The government officials entered the courtyard, walked to the main house, and went up the two flights of stairs to the living quarters.[57] Shakabpa recalled:

> We were scared because these servants and monks had no instruction but were just hanging around. So Chömpel Thuden sent his servant to look for the soldiers and the moment he went outside the labrang courtyard he saw the soldiers coming and came right back. Immediately after this the soldiers came marching into the Reting Labrang house and straightaway went on the rooftops and courtyard and completely took over the situation. We were very relieved and got together in a single group again.[58]

When the trungtsi were told that Reting Dzasa had gone to the house of the Dalai Lama's family, they sent Tsarong and someone from Reting Labrang to "ask" him to return at once since he was the official head of the labrang. At the Dalai Lama's family's house, after a short wait, Tsarong was told that the dzasa had just gone back to Reting from the back of the house. Fearing that he might be running away, Tsarong sent his servant to follow the road from the back of the house while he followed on horseback from the front. The dzasa, however, had gone straight to Reting Labrang, and Tsarong met him at the entrance.[59]

The senior trunyichemmo told Reting Dzasa that they were there to search and seal Reting Labrang because the recent bomb incident had caused much suspicion.[60] He said Reting Dzasa would have to go to the Kashag, and he ordered the two Kashag aides-de-camp, Shatra and Tsarong, to accompany him and the ex-dzasa. Tsarong recalled his fear that the prisoners would escape:

> With a few soldiers as an escort, we were sent with the dzasas and told to inform the Kashag that the trungtsi were still conducting their search of Reting Labrang. The two dzasas and ourselves were on horseback while

56. Reting Dzasa, interview.
57. Anon1, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
58. Shakabpa, interview.
59. Ibid.
60. Anon1, interview.

the soldiers were coming on foot. . . . They were riding good horses and started to trot with them. I was a bit frightened since they had such good horses and the soldiers had lagged somewhat behind us. I thought if they wanted to they could easily have escaped. But they didn't try. As we reached Talam Gongmo where the path [to the Potala] goes uphill, we dismounted and Reting Dzasa asked me where Surkhang and Lhalu had gone. I told them they had gone to inspect the road by Drepung, but that I wasn't sure. The dzasa knew me personally and said that this doesn't seem to be true and then added bitterly, "Today we are going to get our reward for the discovery and enthronement of the true Dalai Lama."

At the Kashag we were told to take the dzasas to Trayde Leygung and stay there with them while the shapes sent a proposal to the regent to dismiss and imprison them. After about half an hour, the two dzasas were summoned to the regent's offices and the dismissal order was read. It said, "Reting Labrang's overt and covert evil designs against the government have now come to the surface and they must be sternly investigated. Therefore, for the time being, both your ranks and privileges will be withdrawn and appropriate punishments will be given in accordance with the investigation. Until then you will be kept under surveillance in the Sharcenchog prison [in the Potala]." Then the regent's ADCs removed the two dzasas' official dress and sent them to prison.[61]

By the time Reting Labrang was sealed, it was getting late, so the arresting party decided to split into two groups to save time, one going to seal the house of Phünkang Kung and his son, and the other, the house of Sandutsang Lo Gendün. These three were very close to Reting and were suspected of being part of the conspiracy.

During the searches of Reting Labrang and the quarters of Nyungne Lama and Khardo Rimpoche, a hand grenade was found wrapped in brocade, like a gift parcel of money, with the label "many gold *sang*." Many small biscuit tins with sliding covers like the one used in the bomb attempt were also discovered, as were highly incriminating letters and drafts of letters exchanged by Reting and his labrang officials in Lhasa.[62]

61. Tsarong (Rimshi), interview. Kapshöba drafted the dismissal order that was sent to the regent for his approval.

62. Anon1, interview; Shakabpa, interview; Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 39. Shakabpa said that there was no question about the grenade, for he saw it himself (Shakabpa, interview). Subsequent investigation established that these grenades were originally given

On the day of the sealings in Lhasa, Nyungne and Khardo had fled from Reting Labrang. Khardo was arrested the next day, but Nyungne was discovered only some days later in the house of a *khatsara* in the Barkor neighborhood. Before he could be arrested, Nyungne ran into the latrine of that house, locked the door, and shot himself.[63]

RETING'S ARREST

One of Reting's attendants recalled that he was on the roof of Reting's residence, scattering ceremonial dough effigies for the birds, when he saw the soldiers coming. He assumed they were just a troop on their way to Nagchuka; soldiers frequently stopped to ask Reting Rimpoche's blessing.[64]

Rupön Anadawa's group arrived first and went immediately to guard the monks in Reting monastery. When the soldiers entered the monastery, none of the monks paid any attention to them. Anadawa secured the area and then surrounded Reting's cottage. When he had the area under control, he gave a bugle signal. Thereupon Rupön Kesang went to Reting's quarters, telling an attendant, Ngawang Trinley, that he and his troops were headed north and wanted an audience with Reting. This was granted without argument. Kesang then sent a messenger to the shapes telling them all was well and that they should come quickly.[65] Reting's own account of the events that followed was recorded by his guard, Pebola:

to an army commander, Chingba, at the time he went to serve in Kham. Apparently he died before returning them to the government, and his brother-in-law, the lay official Tsheden Phüntso, used several to pay a debt he owed to a horse trader named Tsering Tobgye. Tsering, in turn, sold the grenades to Reting Labrang. (Shakabpa, interview; Sambo [Rimshi], interview; IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 27 April 1947; Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 23–24.).

63. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 41. *Khatsara* are persons of mixed Nepalese and Tibetan parentage.

64. Ngawang Trinley, interview.

65. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 32. Lhalu and Surkhang had in the meantime been talking about their fear that Reting had already escaped. Surkhang told Lhalu that he, if so, would not be able to face Lhasa but would flee to a foreign country, while Lhalu said that since he had a big family, he would return whatever happened, good or bad (ibid.).

> While I was guarding Reting in prison he told me: "One pleasant morning I was in my cottage relaxing when the fourth Rupön [Kesang] of the Trapchi Regiment came to me suddenly. He prostrated three times and offered me a ceremonial scarf and then told me that two shapes and a group of soldiers were about to arrive here. He further told me that their purpose for coming to Reting was to take me to Lhasa and that I should get ready for the journey. At that time I sensed the danger and decided against surrendering myself to them. I thought it was better to escape and decided to slip out through the back door of my house and then go to the stable and get a horse. I carried a holy peg in my pocket to protect myself from weapons, and my two personal attendants were with me. [But as I started to leave] Rupön Kesang stopped me and prostrated before me, pleading, "Rimpoche, please don't go. Even if you manage to escape, your relative the Dzasa and others in Lhasa will suffer a great deal." At this point I realized that if I challenged the arrest there was no doubt that my relatives and friends would be tortured, etc. Thus I returned and asked him [Kesang] whether they have arrested my dzasa and the others. He said that they had not been arrested and that I would learn more in detail from the two shapes when they arrived. Before I could reply, Surkhang Shape and Commander Shukoba arrived with the soldiers.[66]

Ngawang Trinley similarly recalled that Rupön Kesang initially prostrated before the ex-regent, and he added that Kesang was not dressed in his battle uniform and was unarmed. He recalled that Kesang told Reting that the National Assembly had sent him and the shapes to "invite" Reting to come to Lhasa to talk about some outstanding issues between the government and Reting Labrang. Since Reting had helped the Trapchi Regiment when he was regent, Kesang apologized to Reting by emphasizing that he was ordered to come and had not volunteered for the task. Reting replied bitterly that he had worked hard, had served the government, and had discovered the Dalai Lama; yet in the end he was being blamed for crimes.

Surkhang and Lhalu then arrived at the cottage. They prostrated, were blessed by Reting, and then sat down. Reting asked them why they had come, and Surkhang answered as Kesang had, adding that Reting should not worry. Reting agreed to return with them, and Surk-

66. Shar rtse (Pebola) 1983: 112–15.

hang and Lhalu stepped out of the room to arrange the transport back to Lhasa for that very afternoon.[67]

Reting Rimpoche, according to Pebola, recalled:

> Surkhang told me that they had come to take me to Lhasa and that I should get myself ready at once. I asked Surkhang why I was being called to Lhasa so suddenly and what arrangements I had to make for the journey. Surkhang told me that the reports regarding my officials in Lhasa were not good and that I would learn the details when I reach Lhasa. He further told me that since I was the lama who had performed the "first hair-cutting" ceremony for the new Dalai Lama, I would come to no harm in Lhasa. Regarding the traveling arrangements, Surkhang told me to take only my two personal attendants, three riding horses, and one horse to carry the baggage. He forbade me to take any weapons but said I could take any other necessary items.
>
> My horse-keeper saddled my personal horse called Yudrug. I put on a beautiful set of robes and took religious objects and a bunch of Tibetan one-hundred-dollar notes wrapped in a cloth. I asked one of my personal bodyguards and my Junior Attendant [Söpön Shömba] to accompany me. When I went to mount my horse, Surkhang interrupted and told me to use a mule. Surkhang knew that my horse Yudrug was not an ordinary horse since it had left its hoofprints on rocks, and might have thought that if I rode Yudrug I might escape.[68]

In the meantime, in Lhasa, the monks of Sera Che college rose in rebellion against the government.

THE MURDER OF THE SERA CHE ABBOT

On 16 April,[69] a cash distribution of one silver coin per monk had been made at the Tshongcö Prayer Festival, and most Sera Che monks

67. Ngawang Trinley, interview; Lha klu ([Lhalu] 1985: 32–33) said Surkhang's answer had been that a hand grenade had exploded in Lhasa and they had therefore been sent by the assembly to invite Reting to Lhasa. Interestingly, when they were alone for a few moments Reting told Surkhang that he knew there had been differences between them over the Treshong estate when he was regent, but these were small matters, and he would be happy to return the estate to Surkhang (Surkhang, interview).

68. Shar rtse (Pebola) 1983: 112–15.

69. There appear to have been two 25th's in the second month of the Tibetan calendar that year.

had gone to Lhasa in the morning to participate and collect their money. When they returned to the monastery in the afternoon they learned that the government had sent officials to seal the property of Reting Labrang and Khardo Labrang in Sera Che. The Sera Che Abbot, as tradition required, had already returned from Lhasa to accompany the government officials.

The Sera Che monks had become angry and sullen when Reting's officials had been arrested in Lhasa on 15 April. Their anger was directed not only against the government and Taktra, but also against their own abbot, Tendar, the Mongolian *geshe* Taktra had appointed in 1945 after the Lhundrup Dzong incident. His support of Taktra was not at all popular with the Sera Che monks, who were overwhelmingly loyal to Reting.

On the day of the sealings, the Sera Che Abbot incited the monks by appearing unnecessarily pleased by the government's actions. One monk's recollection reveals the bitterness the monks felt toward their abbot. He said that Tendar showed no sign of sadness during the sealing but was so eager that he almost helped carry the lamp the officials used to heat the wax to seal the rooms. By contrast, the abbots of the other colleges walked behind the officials and clearly showed their displeasure.[70]

After the sealings, when the abbot returned to his quarters, the militant pro-Reting monks asked the top scholar monks (the *geshe lharampa*) to request that the abbot intercede with the government on behalf of Reting and the others. Sometime around 5:30 or 6:00 P.M., these scholar monks went to the abbot, but he angrily replied, "What do you people know about politics and about Reting? Yes, yes, now I understand you people. You want to correct the government."[71] A second version of this event, told by Lhalu, holds that the monks went to the abbot's manager, not the abbot, and told him, "Sera Che must send a forceful and united appeal to the government to persuade it to take a more understanding attitude," and the manager responded, "What do you people know? The need to arrest Reting is apparently the result of Reting's own misdeeds. There is no reason for our college to interfere

70. Lobsang Chönden, interview.
71. Ibid.

in this affair."[72] Whichever version is correct, the monk representatives carried the negative answer back to the mass of angry monks waiting in the courtyard in front of Sera Che's assembly hall. This convinced them that the abbot and manager were on Taktra's side and had to be eliminated (killed) if Sera Che was to be able to confront the government and help their beloved Reting.[73]

Later that evening, a large group of angry and armed *dobdo* monks, led by the well-known *dobdo* Gyase Garbo (Chamba Yeshe), went to the manager's quarters. As they pushed their way into his house the manager pulled out a revolver, shot Gyase Garbo, and wounded another *dobdo,* Lhopey Gartrug. It is said that the manager's revolver then jammed and he was immediately killed by a *dobdo* named Tshephel, who struck him with a sword. Two of the manager's monk servants were also killed.[74]

When the abbot, whose apartment was above his manager's quarters, heard the shots and saw the mob of sword-carrying monks pushing their way into the lower apartment, he realized that they were coming for him. Since the monks were on the staircase, he jumped from a window to the northeast corner of the roof, hoping to escape in the dusk. The monks pursued him as he ran along the edge of the roof toward Ngagpa college. At the southwest corner of the Sera Che roof, he climbed the large gilded pillar ornament, possibly thinking of jumping down to the Ngagpa college roof. He hesitated, however, as the gap between the two buildings was a formidable four to five feet. At that moment the monks caught up with him and pulled him off the pillar. They stabbed and struck him with knives, an axe, and swords until he was dead.[75] An Amdo incarnation, Aka Trulku, and an attendant of the abbot's named Döndrup were able to escape from the abbot's room in the commotion. Döndrup ran to the regent's house in Lhasa and told him what had happened.[76]

From this point on it can be said that Sera Che college was in rebel-

72. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 41.
73. Lobsang Chönden, interview.
74. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 42–43; Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 52–53. Chamba (A) (interview) related similar versions.
75. Lobsang Chönden, interview. Ka shod ([Kapshöba] 1985: 53) related a parallel version.
76. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 42.

lion. The original outburst had been spontaneous. After the killings, the monks milled around the roof, gathering here and there in small groups with no leader. The full weight of their crime was just sinking in. At this juncture, Tsenya Rimpoche, an incarnate lama only about eighteen years old, declared himself the "war leader" of the monks.[77] Since Tsenya Rimpoche was the "speech" reincarnation of Tamdrin, the most important protective deity of Sera Che, the monks thought that with the survival of Sera Che at stake he would have tremendous supernatural powers; they therefore accepted him as their leader.[78] Tsenya took the sword, silver mirrors, and five-colored scarf from the famous Sera Che image of Tamtrin and had his servant carry them on his back while he walked around the monastery supervising the monks, with the help of some of the militant *dobdos*.

At this juncture one of the most respected of the Sera Che officials, Gyurme, the *chiso* official of Pitu khamtsen, tried to defuse the situation. He admonished the militant monks to stop acting like madmen and insisted that the issues could be discussed later and resolved. His comments only served to infuriate the mob. A Triu Khamba *dobdo* monk with a gun threatened him, shouting, "You are also telling us to do nothing and so also must be the servant of Taktra." Gyurme was spared only when Tsenya intervened.[79]

Tsenya Rimpoche organized a meeting of the monks for midnight that night. There they decided that Sera Che would support Reting and fight against Taktra. A large number of monks—perhaps as many as fifty—volunteered to go into Lhasa that very evening to kill Gyambumgang, one of Taktra's closest advisors, burn his house, and break into Reting Labrang to get the weapons that were stored there.[80]

77. A number of days before the arrests in Lhasa, Reting Labrang had begun meeting with supporters in Sera Che college. One of the key figures then was a young and learned incarnate lama, Tshamtru Rimpoche; another was a famous *geshe,* Lhoba Lhoka. These two met Khardo Rimpoche in Lhasa to discuss what the Sera Che monks should do in case of trouble. After they returned, they followed Khardo's instructions and called a meeting of a small number of trusted monks at a place called Miser Thromo. Before any plan could be put into effect, however, the arrests took place. After the murder of the abbots, the two played only minor roles (Thubten Thuwang, interview).

78. Ibid. Deities can have three, five, eight, or even more incarnations. Three is the most common number, one representing the mind, one the speech, and the third the body.

79. Ibid.

80. Ka shod ([Kapshöba] 1985: 54) wrote that they were going after Gyambumgang and Shakabpa. Some government officials sarcastically referred to Taktra's close ad-

The monks headed toward Lhasa via Ramoche, but ran into son armed policemen at the Dosam bridge. They exchanged fire, killing policeman and forcing the rest to flee, then continued on to Gyambun gang's house. Having heard about the rebellion, however, Gyambun gang had gone to the Potala. He had left armed servants in his hous who opened fire when the monks arrived and prevented them fro getting close enough to the house to burn it down. The monks the went to Reting Labrang to seize weapons, but were again thwarte when they encountered armed soldiers who fired on them.[81]

The sound of shooting in Lhasa following the report of the murd of the abbots caused many leading officials besides Gyambumgang t move from their homes to the safety of the Potala. These officials he meetings and decided to post reinforcements at the east, west, ar south gates of the Shöl wall and to lock all the gate doors. The regent aide-de-camp, Thubten Lengmön, joined the other officials and tea fully told them that the regent, who was then close to seventy, had bee badly upset by the events. It appears that when he heard the shootir he jumped out of bed and fell, and was having trouble breathing. Tl shapes immediately called the doctor, and went to Taktra to offer pra ers. When they arrived, they were told that the regent could not spe easily and did not want to meet them. They returned and decided t meet early the next morning to discuss their next move.[82]

On 17 April (the twenty-sixth of the Tibetan second month), Lha was semi-paralyzed with fear. Shops and schools in Lhasa closed, an 200 monks from Drepung were placed in the Tsuglagang Temple, o tensibly to pray, but really to guard the temple.[83] Meanwhile, th Kashag met with the Trungtsigye and the Chigyab Khembo and con vened the Large Abbreviated Assembly. The assembly indicated the

visors as the "little government" (in Tibetan: *dga' ldan pho brang chung chung*). Gyar bumgang and Shakabpa were two of the most powerful of this "little governmen (Sambo [Rimshi], interview).

81. Chamba(B) (interview). He is a Sera Che monk who participated in this raid

82. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 55–57.

83. Sogo Geshela, interview; Gelek (Rimpoche), interview. The British report the first two days after the murder of the abbot as follows: "There has been desulto rifle and machine gun firing for the last two days and nights, and it seems that there is mild engagement between monks and troops in the neighborhood of Sera" (IOR, L PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 20 April 1947

full support for the actions taken by the government as well as for any similar actions they might take in the future to quell the Reting rebellion. However, they asked the Kashag to allow *them* to act as the investigating committee in the Reting case.[84]

That same day, the regent reduced the risk of other monasteries joining Sera Che by instructing all the abbots and ex-abbots of the Three Seats who were attending the National Assembly Meeting to stay in Lhasa rather than return to their monasteries. The government sent a liaison officer to see that their needs were met and to insure that they remained.[85] The Kashag also ordered that the Lhasa evening bugle would now be sounded at sundown rather than at 9 P.M. and that from then until the dawn bugle anyone found outside would be shot or arrested. Furthermore, messengers were sent to Sera officials from other colleges to instruct them to order the Che officials to come to the National Assembly to explain why they were in revolt and to hand over the ringleaders. The other Sera officials issued the order, but reported to the Kashag the next day that the Sera Che monks would not obey them; in fact, they had threatened to kill them if they did not stop talking.[86] In the meantime, Reting was on his way to Lhasa.

RETING ARRIVES IN LHASA

Surkhang, Reting, and the army troops left Reting's cottage at about 2 P.M. on the sixteenth, the day the arrest was made. Lhalu finished the sealings and caught up with them the next day at Talung. There they received a message from Lhasa instructing them to return by an unusual route. Normally they would have come via the Phembo Gola pass, a route that passed in front of Sera monastery; now the government wanted them to return via a route just west of Drepung monastery. The government was particularly worried because Nyungne Lama was still at large and might be organizing a military force. Surkhang speculated

84. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 43; Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 58.
85. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 59.
86. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 59–61.

that Nyungne would head for Reting monastery, so he sent sixteen soldiers to protect the sealed houses and watch for Nyungne.[87]

Surkhang and Lhalu disagreed with the plan of avoiding Phembo Gola pass. They felt that the monks would not dare to attack, and if an attack was made, they felt confident of handling it.[88] They immediately sent a message back to Lhasa saying that they would be coming through the Phembo Gola pass the next day.[89]

After crossing the Phembo Gola pass as they had planned, at Lingbu Dzong, they received another message from Lhasa, warning them that the monks of Sera Che had rebelled and murdered their abbot and his manager. Up to this point Reting had been wearing elegant traveling robes, but the shapes now felt this made him too conspicuous and ordered him to change into the costume of an ordinary monk.[90] They also separated Reting from the attendants who were accompanying him, sending the latter immediately to the Trapchi Regiment, where they were imprisoned.[91]

The government also took elaborate military precautions. Machine guns were mounted on each of the four corners of the Trapchi Garrison and about 400 troops of the Bodyguard Regiment established defensive positions at strategic points such as at Tsesumthang and along the large empty canal known as Chera that ran below Sera (see Figure 56). Moreover, command of the Bodyguard forces was taken from the regular rupön and given to the battle-experienced Rupön Bökhangwa, who happened to be visiting Lhasa at the time. Thus, when Reting and the escort reached the end of the Dode valley and were about to turn in front of Sera monastery on their way to the Potala, the army was i place and ready to protect them.

In Sera, the Che college monks decided to attack the two shapes and

87. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 33–34, 36.
88. Lhalu, interview.
89. Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 36–37.
90. Ngawang Trinley, interview.
91. Reting described this as follows: "We halted [at Phembo Gola] and rested for about an hour. At that time Surkhang told me that I will have to go to the Potala and that my two attendants will be sent directly to Lhasa from here and that they will have to spend the night at the Trapchi Regimental Headquarters. My attendants were in tears [when they heard this]. I divided my money in two and gave them half. Before we resumed our journey from Lingbu Dzong, Surkhang searched me and removed the protective peg from my pocket." (Shar rtse [Pebola] 1983: 112–15.)



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View from Sera to Trapchi (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

rescue Reting. Murdering their abbot was a clear act of rebellion, but the monks really had no well-formulated goals other than to obtain the release of Reting's advisors and rescue Reting. Because Sera Che had been forced to turn over their new rifles and ammunition at the conclusion of the Lhundrup Dzong incident in 1945, they had only an assortment of old weapons and a few guns owned by individual monks. An armory belonging to the Sera Lachi (the monastery as a whole) was seized by the monks, but it too contained only old-fashioned arms which had been used during the 1911 Sera fight with the Chinese.[92] Nevertheless, Reting's arrest involved the honor of Sera Che, and the monks were prepared to accept death in preserving that honor. They took strategic positions around and above Sera and waited with what weapons they had for Reting and the shapes to appear so that they could rush out to free him.

The government, as was indicated above, was ready for them. When several hundred monks rushed down from the monastery as the Reting party crossed in front of Sera, they were met by withering fire from the Trapchi and Bodyguard regiments. Tibetan troops were usually under orders to fire only if they had targets (to save ammunition), but on this occasion they were told to fire continuously at Sera until Reting and the escort had safely passed. The monks were quickly forced to retreat into the monastery. One observer who was watching from Lhasa through binoculars said that it looked as though a dam had burst and a red stream poured forth; but, just as quickly, the flood of red returned to the monastery.[93]

Lhalu and Reting went directly to the Potala, where Reting was placed in the Sharcenchog prison. This was 18 April 1947, the twenty-seventh day of the second Tibetan month.[94]

Witty, sarcastic songs were sung on the Lhasa streets at this time:

92. Ibid.; Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 60–61.

93. Tashi Döndrup, interview; Wangdu, interview; Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 37–38.

94. Ibid.; Thubten Thuwang, interview; Shar rtse (Pebola) 1983: 110; Anon1, interview; Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 96. Reting was put in the room of one of the Dalai Lama's cooks at Sharcenchog, rather than in a prison cell. His room had a window facing south, and he continued to wear his normal lama's robes. He was not permitted to meet or speak with either Khardo Rimpoche or Reting Dzasa during his imprisonment. (Anon1, interview.)

The old goat, acting show-offish,
has stuck his beard on the tiger.
The tiger, being shameless,
has suddenly eaten the goat.

I had a friend who was a goat
who was lost in the mouth of a tiger.
In the future if I have a friend,
I musn't show him to the tiger.

Reting says he's a goat
and is staying in a big corral.
Taktra's saying he's a tiger cub
had done in the goat.[95]

In these songs the goat means Reting, the first syllable of whose name means horn but is homonymous with goat, and the tiger is Taktra, the first syllable of whose name means tiger.

Reting was kept under strict surveillance; the guards had orders to kill him if his followers tried to free him.[96] Two government officials, the regent's aide-de-camp, Kesang Ngawang, and Tseja Darhan, were placed in charge of security (Kesang Ngawang was a member of the same household as the pro-Taktra commander-in-chief Kesang Tsultrim). These two supervised the imprisonment and issued all orders to the prison guards. Two subordinate government officials (one monk, one lay) were appointed to stay in Sharcenchog with Reting. The lay official, Urgyen Namdol (nicknamed Porkyola), was the son of Lungshar and the brother of Lhalu Shape. He had been barred from government service at the time of his father's punishment in 1934 but had been allowed to rejoin the government shortly after his brother Lhalu had been made a shape in 1946.[97] His monk-official colleague initially

95. In Tibetan: *ra pho dang dod langs nas / stag la 'og shol g.yog song / stag pho ngo tsha med pas / ra pho hob ste bzas song. grogs po ra gcig yod pa / stag gi kha la shor song / phyin chad grogs po byung na / stag la ston rgyu mi 'dug. rwa sgreng ra pho yin zer / ra mo che la bsdad shag / stag brag stag phrug yin zer / ra pho rtag rtag bzos song.*

96. Shar rtse (Pebola) 1983: 121.

97. Pebola (ibid.: 122) reported Reting's version of the Lungshar affair, which is interesting in that Reting portrayed himself as blameless. Reting told Pebola, "Urgyan Namdol holds a grudge against me for his father Lungshar. But he was a child at that

was Thubten Nyima Meru. However, his trustworthiness was immediately questioned when he appeared to show unusual respect to Reting, and he was replaced by the monk official Shartse Yeshe Thubten (nicknamed Pebola), who was considered a safe choice because he had lost an estate and house during Reting's reign, and because he had little respect for lamas, religion, or people in high positions.[98] In addition to these officials, Reting was guarded by about twenty soldiers, a military noncommissioned officer named Gyagpön Kesang, and a nongazeteered official named Chola Chambala, whose duty it was to take Reting his meals.[99]

THE SERA CHE WAR

The day after the unsuccessful attempt to free Reting, the Kashag took further precautions. Fearing that an assemblage of thousands of monks parading in the center of the city would precipitate disorder, the Kashag, for the first time in 300 years, canceled the great religious procession known as Sebang that is held at the conclusion of the Tshongcö Prayer Festival. At the same time, the rebel leaders in Sera Che organized a second raid into Lhasa to seize the weapons in Sandutsang's sealed house. Tsenya Trulku and about fifty monks stole into Lhasa late on the evening of the nineteenth and attacked the police guarding Sandutsang's house. In the ensuing battle five monks were killed and two wounded and captured, and three policemen were killed or wounded, but the monks did obtain a number of arms, mostly rifles.[100] This suc-

time and does not seem to understand the real facts. It was the aristocrats of the government who passed the judgment on his father. They sent the draft of the judgment to take out Lungshar's eyes to me for approval but I neither approved it nor put my seal on it. I told them, I am a *gelong* monk and as such cannot approve such orders to take out the eyes of a human being. Even in the case of whether Lhalu was the real son of Lungshar or not, I let him [Lhalu] enter the government service because I thought that since the other sons of Lungshar have been debarred from entering the government service, Lhalu could lead and support his brothers." As was indicated in Chapter 6, Reting's silence was taken as agreement with the punishment.

98. Ibid.: 111–12.
99. Shakabpa, interview.
100. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 68–69.

cess boosted the monks' morale but also pushed the government to initiate action against the rebellious monks.

The next morning, the twentieth (the Tibetan twenty-ninth), the assembly informed the Kashag that it was impossible to tolerate the Sera Che monks' behavior any longer and recommended that a shape be appointed with full decision-making powers to suppress the monks (by peaceful or military means). The Kashag at once summoned the two commanders-in-chief to a meeting that began with Tsipön Shakabpa, a strong Taktra supporter, sarcastically comparing the current situation to that described in the old proverb, "Even though the dog steals one's food, one smiles; and even though the temple is filled with a bad odor, one smiles." Shakabpa then said, "We don't need these Sera Che monks. We should destroy Sera Che. I swear I wouldn't have regrets to amount to even a single seed of sesame if we did that. A shape acting as commander-in-chief should go right away and destroy those Sera Che monks."[101]

Kapshöba Shape then volunteered to take command of such an operation, saying that Surkhang and Lhalu had just returned from arresting Reting, and Ramba, the monk-shape, was old, so it was his turn to take the lead. The other shapes agreed, and the commander-in-chief, Kesang Tsultrim, the trunyichemmo Ngawang Namgyel (Gyambumgang), the tsipöns Ngabö and Namseling, and another thirty lesser monk and lay officials were assigned to assist Kapshöba. Their mission was simple: to crush the Sera Che rebellion by whatever means were necessary.[102] They established their headquarters at the Trapchi garrison. At the same time, the Kashag sent urgent orders to Commander Tshögaw in Gyantse to move his regiment to Lhasa by forced march.[103]

Kapshöba and the other officials expected to begin military action immediately. However, when they arrived they found that most of the capable troops in the Trapchi Regiment had been sent to guard the Potala and other critical sites; those that remained were predominantly

101. Ibid.: 70–72. Kapshöba says Shakabpa spoke in favor of destroying all of Sera, but Lhalu, who was also there, says he only mentioned Sera Che (Lhalu, interview). This is certainly correct, since Sera Mey college was not at all involved in this struggle and its monks were staying quietly in the monastery at that time.

102. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 73–74.

103. Tashi Döndrup, interview; Wangdu, interview.

the old and infirm. They concluded that it was too risky to launch an attack on Sera Che without first investigating how many capable troops were available, but decided to fire some artillery rounds from the Trapchi Regiment's two howitzers at areas on the mountainside above Sera to show the monks that they had arrived and were serious. To their chagrin, the inexperienced gunners put their shots right over the hill above Sera and into the next county; this, of course, produced hooting and jeering from the monks.[104]

In Lhasa, the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau informed H. E. Richardson, the head of the British Mission in Lhasa, that Kapshöba had been sent to Trapchi to quell the rebellion. They asked him to allow R. Fox, the mission's radio operator, to help the army with radio communications in Trapchi. Richardson says he was reluctant to agree, but finally allowed it after a second formal request and a guarantee of his safety.[105] On that same day, the Tibetan postmaster general, Phünrab, told the British representative in Lhasa that the Tibetan government had stopped all ordinary mail for a week and asked them not to accept any letters from Tibetans for transmission to India in the British mail bag.[106]

The inept artillery display prompted Kapshöba to summon J. Taring, a former army commander who knew how to use machine guns and artillery.[107] At the time, Taring was one of the Laja treasury officials. Ironically, he had maintained a very close personal (but not political)

104. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 77–78.

105. H. E. Richardson, personal communication dated 3 April 1986. The only other involvement of the British came when R. Fox, the mission's radio operator, on one occasion and without Richardson's knowledge or approval, helped the Tibetan army lay one gun (ibid.). Ka shod ([Kapshöba] 1985: 77–78) states that Richardson lent the Tibetan government two wireless sets, but these sets were really the property of the Tibetans, not the British (Richardson, personal communication). Ka shod also claims that Richardson told the government that Britain would support Tibet by "all means" so they did not have to worry about Sera Che, but the India Office Archives show no such exchanges, and it is certain that Kapshöba's account is incorrect. Richardson could not unilaterally pledge arms to Tibet and certainly could not offer to support Tibet in all possible ways.

106. IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 27 April 1947.

107. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 80. Taring had received training in machine guns from the British in 1922 in Gyantse, when he was a commander of Kumbela's Trongdra Regiment. He later also learned about artillery positioning.

relationship with Reting Rimpoche. Taring's recollection of the Kapshöba order reveals the fears engendered by the Reting situation:

> It was late at night. I was about to go to sleep when someone started knocking on the door. It was a tense situation. Reting had been arrested and there were a lot of strange noises—like the call of the guardian deity of the cremation ground. You could hear a sound that sounded like someone was moaning—it was really a frightening noise. . . . I have personally heard that scary noise. . . . I told the servants not to open the door immediately. My wife and mother were taken outside from the back of the house since it was difficult to tell whether the visitor was a friend or foe. I took my revolver and told the servant to peep out and try to see who was there but not to open the door yet. He said that there was a note for me from the Trapchi Garrison and I told him to have the person pass the note through a crack in the door. It was really a note from Kapshöba and Gyambumgang ordering me to report to the Trapchi office before sunrise on the next day. . . . I was told to prepare and look after the machine guns [and cannon].[108]

On the twenty-second, Kapshöba ordered another artillery barrage, which was intended to intimidate the monks without destroying the monastery. Taring fired a number of rounds at Patilinga Park below Sera, where it was suspected that monks were hiding; he hit the cottage there, which sent up clouds of billowing smoke.[109]

The next morning, 23 April, a large group of religious and business leaders arrived in Trapchi to ask Kapshöba whether the government would permit them to mediate a settlement.[110] Kapshöba conferred with his staff and then informed them of the government's terms: the monks had to renounce their past behavior and take an oath to abide by the government's laws both now and in the future, and they had to turn over the ringleaders for punishment.[111]

108. J. Taring, interview.

109. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 81.

110. The mediators included the Ganden Thri Rimpoche, Sharpa Chöje, Changtse Chöje, representatives of Sakya Dagchen Rimpoche, Kundeling Hutuktu, Phurbucho Rimpoche, Geshe Samdrup Rimpoche, and officials from Sera Mey and Ngagpa colleges and from Ganden. Important trading families were also represented.

111. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 82–84. Kapshöba wrote that he was actually responsible for starting the negotiations. He said he did not want to destroy Sera militarily so as soon as he took command he went to the Ganden Thri Rimpoche (who was living

Later that same day, Sera Che sent nine representatives to the Cher canal, the site of the negotiations. These monks informed the mediator that they could not respond until the monks who were guarding th hills behind Sera returned later that evening, and asked them to guar antee that the monastery would not be attacked before they could dis cuss the issue and reply the next day. Kapshöba then notified th Kashag that he was delaying the attack until after the negotiations ha been completed.[112]

That next day, 24 April, thirteen Sera Che monks, led by an old *gesh* named Phulama, arrived at the Chera early in the morning to presen the monks' views. They informed the mediators that Reting had mad great contributions to the well-being of Tibet, so the governmen should now show their appreciation and restore his (and Khardo's titles and property. They also argued that since the abbot's manager ha opened fire first, the government should not insist on meting out indi vidual punishments for the murders but, rather, should punish the col lege as a whole. The mediators were disappointed with this unrealisti response. They told the monks that the situation had gone too far fo such talk and urged them to compromise with the government befor it was too late. Just as Tendar had argued before he was killed, th mediators pointed out that Reting and Khardo were under arrest du to their own activities, so there was no reason for Sera Che to rebel. I the monks yielded now, the mediators said, the government would trea them leniently.

The threat of dire consequences did not sway the monks. They re sponded that even if the government destroyed the monastery, the would fight until the end; they would never admit their guilt. Gesh Phulama, the chief Sera Che representative, replied haughtily, "W know all about such promises. During the Lhundrup Dzong case Ser Che bowed down and the result was the so-called fair judgment of law We neither gained prestige nor any benefits. What we received was se

in his house compound) and told him he should organize a group of mediators. Kap shöba also wrote that on the evening of 20 April he secretly sent his relative Drangto t urge the Ganden Thri Rimpoche to act and sent Pandatsang Yambe to contact th Khamba traders in Lhasa (ibid.: 75–78).

112. Ibid.: 84.

vere punishment and exile for our monks. This time also if we yield, the results will be the same. We have learned our lesson from Lhundrup Dzong. We may not achieve victory against the government, but we are desperate and must see the matter to its conclusion."[113] The Che delegates then repeated their position that if the government restored the rank, entitlements, and property of Reting and Khardo and if they did not insist on punishing specific monks for the murder of the abbot, the monks would certainly "bow down and prostrate" before the government. Until these conditions were met, they said, they would fight and would not have any regrets even if Sera Che were reduced to the condition of "a collapsed tent."[114]

The next day the Sera representatives brought a written statement that repeated the monks' terms and was signed "unanimously by all the Sera Che monks." The mediators gave this to Kapshöba and urged him not to demand the handing over of specific monks. After a brief meeting with his staff, Kapshöba agreed to this condition so long as the monks as a body surrendered to the government. The mediators notified the monks but received no reply for several days. Consequently, on 26 April Kapshöba and his staff decided that the mediation had failed and it was time to launch an attack.[115]

Kapshöba's battle plan called for a coordinated assault from three sides: the Gyantse Regiment from the west, the Trapchi Regiment from the north, and the Bodyguard Regiment from the south. The attack began after dark on the evening of 26 April. The soldiers of the Trapchi Regiment quietly moved into the Dode valley under cover of darkness, climbed the north slope of the hills behind Sera, and positioned themselves to launch a surprise attack on the monks holding the hilltop (Tseri). At the same time the Gyantse Regiment moved up from Chupsang to attack Sera Utse (see Map 10).

As dawn broke on the twenty-seventh, the soldiers on the north first

113. Tashi Döndrup, interview.
114. Ibid.
115. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 88–89. Others say that the offer was that the monks did not have to hand over the murderers or their ringleaders but only had to turn over their arms and pledge support and loyalty to the government. Punishments for the guilty would be worked out later by the mediators. (Lha klu [Lhalu] 1985: 44–45; IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 27April 1947; Tashi Döndrup, interview: Wangdu, interview.)

took Thuri, the highest point on the hill. From there they fired down at the monks who were camped in the dip between Thuri and Tseri and quickly drove them back to Tseri. Eventually they stormed and took Tseri, suffering heavy casualties. A second Trapchi Regiment prong took first Ketsang Ritrö and then Chutinggang.[116] This group also saw heavy fighting, but was aided by machine-gun fire from Patilinga.[117]

In the west, the Gyantse Regiment attacked Sera Utse by way of Chupsang in the Nyare valley and were joined by the Trapchi soldiers coming down from the mountaintop. At the same time, one Bodyguard unit attacked the building known as Trawu Gongga (Nanggating) from Chisu. The remaining Bodyguard troops were deployed on the plain in front of Sera to protect against the monks swarming out to Lhasa and gradually to close in on the main gate of the monastery. The government's forces were supported by artillery fire from Trapchi,[118] although most of the artillery rounds were fired at targets outside the monastery. Taring recalls that the first shot flew over the Sera hill into the next area of Phembo, a second shell hit in the center of Sera in the area known as Rabsel, and a third shell hit Chutinggang and caused a small fire there. Taring said:

> If we really wanted to blast them it could have been done in five to six minutes. All we had to do was concentrate the fire on one spot and blast away with two or three cannons. . . . Instead, we fired up at the rocks between the monastery and Chutinggang so as to scare the monks more. We were firing just for effect and did not realize that there were a lot of monks hiding there. When we started blasting away at what we thought was an empty area, the monks came running out like small red ants. We also fired a few shells on the eastern side of Sera at the walls by Sera's circumambulation road.
>
> Then we were told it was better for us to move so we left two howitzers on the northern side of Trapchi and took two other cannon to Tsesumthang. This was closer to Sera monastery, so we were afraid the monks might suddenly attack us. If 1,000 monks had rushed out and charged us shouting battle cries, what could our two cannons do? So we

116. Tashi Döndrup, interview; Wangdu, interview; Chamba, interview; Lobsang Chönden, interview.
117. J. Taring, interview.
118. Tashi Döndrup, interview; Wangdu, interview; Lobsang Chönden, interview.

> used our heads. We knew that the monks were watching us through binoculars. We therefore cut down several willow trees and shaped them to look like cannons. Then we covered them with black tarpaulin and we placed them at a distance from each other, so that it would appear from a distance that we had four cannons in place.[119]

After the monks retreated into the monastery, the soldiers hoisted their regimental flags on the hilltops. One monk recalled that when these flags were hoisted, the monks in the monastery thought they were the new battle flags they had sewn the day before. It was only when fleeing monks started arriving at the monastery that they realized what had happened.[120] By noon the monks were completely surrounded. From the heights overlooking Sera the soldiers not only could fire down at will but were also able to send mirror signals to their artillery at Trapchi, telling them where the monks were congregated. The government was clearly victorious. The soldiers were told to cease firing in order to give the monks a chance to surrender; Kapshöba, indeed, sent a secret message to the monks imploring them to do so. As in the past, however, this had no effect.[121]

On the morning of the twenty-ninth, the final attack took place. The Gyantse, Trapchi, and Bodyguard troops entered the monastery from different directions. Seeing that their situation was hopeless, one of the militant monks, Thowa Membar, argued that they should destroy all the possessions of Sera Che rather than let the government troops steal and destroy them. He wanted to collect everything in the main assembly hall and then burn the hall. In another part of the monastery, the *dobdo* Gerka tried to convince some monks it was best to round up a large group of monk fighters and try to make a break for it. He knew that some would die, but since some would be able to escape it was better than being captured. His suggestion found no takers among the monks and he fell back from where he was fighting toward the Sera Che main assembly hall. When he arrived there he was shocked to find monks piling up wood at its main door in preparation for setting it ablaze. He angrily told the monks that great learned people had built

119. J. Taring, interview.
120. Lobsang Chönden, interview.
121. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 92.

Sera Che over the centuries and it was not for them to destroy it. He told them he would personally fight until he died to prevent that from happening. The other monks did not dare challenge Gerka, a leader and one of the fiercest *dobdos*. They removed the wood they had piled up.[122] After this, some of the ringleaders tried to slip away, and then others waved a white scarf, indicating surrender. Most of the monk fighters went back into their rooms, changed into monks' robes, and then sat reading prayers as they waited for the soldiers to arrive.[123]

Kapshöba issued firm orders to all officers that all Sera Che buildings should *immediately* be secured with the locks he had brought from Lhasa to prevent looting by the troops. Because of this, almost nothing was taken from the Che college.[124] On the next day, the thirtieth, Kapshöba summoned the officials from all the colleges in Sera. After sternly lecturing them on their disgraceful behavior, he began an investigation to identify the participants in the rebellion. He also had the soldiers search the monastery and confiscate all weapons and ammunition. On 4 May Tsenya Rimpoche returned to Sera and was turned in by another monk, and other escaped monk leaders were apprehended within a matter of weeks.[125]

On 2 May, Sera Che's officials signed an agreement stating that in the future they would abide by the government's laws. The government's troops withdrew from the monastery and marched victoriously to Trapchi and Lhasa.[126] The Sera war had formally ended; the monks returned to their cycle of rituals and prayers. The magnitude of the casualties on both sides is not clear, but it is probable that no more than

122. Lobsang Chönden, interview. Gerka continued to fight until he ran out of ammunition and then he killed himself with his sword (ibid.; Ka shod [Kapshöba] 1985: 97).

123. Thubten Thuwang, interview. Ka shod [Kapshöba] 1985: 97) wrote that at one point when some monks were barricaded in the Sera Che assembly hall, the government's soldiers were about to pour kerosene on the doors and burn them out. Kapshöba and his staff arrived at this point and stopped them. Sera Che thus survived attempts by both sides to destroy it.

124. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 93; Tashi Döndrup, interview; Wangdu, interview. Apparently a few of the private apartments lost some items during the fighting, but these losses were minor compared to the looting that could have taken place.

125. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 100–102; IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 4 May 1947. The troops brought back the head and hands of Trongtöba.

126. Ka shod (Kapshöba) 1985: 104; Wangdu, interview.

200 to 300 monks were killed. The Tibetan army appears to have lost only about 15 soldiers.[127]

In the end, twenty-two monks were arrested and brought to Shöl, where they were punished along with the Reting Labrang officials. Each received whippings of 100 to 200 strokes and were then placed in irons and in wooden cangues. With the exception of five ringleaders, who were imprisoned in Shöl for life, the monks were put into the custody of various aristocrats.[128] One of these aristocrats described his experience:

> The person handed to us was in both chains and a wooden cangue. We had sent someone to collect him. He had received so many whippings that it took five to six hours to reach our house. His buttocks were severely slashed from the whipping. He came wearing a white gown. We kept him in the barn for one night and the next day moved him into the middle floor of our house. At that time monks from Sera's Samdong khamtsen visited me and said, "We heard that [Dorje] has been handed over to you. We will guarantee that he will not escape and we will be responsible if he does, so we request you to be kind and lenient to him." We assured the monks that we would treat him kindly but that since the government has handed him to us, we would be held responsible if he escaped from us. . . . We treated him kindly and never made him do any work for us. Later, when his wounds were healed, he was physically able to get his own food and he could take as much tea and *tsamba* as he wanted. He knew how to tailor well, so he used to earn money doing this. Many people gave him work and he was able to accumulate quite a lot of possessions such as carpets, etc. . . . We released his chains only while he was inside the house . . . we were convinced he would never run away but one day he suddenly escaped. We went to the Kashag to report this and they told us that there were many similar cases.[129]

In retrospect, the only hope for the monks would have been to slip out of their monastery under cover of darkness and rush Trapchi, where

127. Ka shod ([Kapshöba] 1985: 92) says that only 32 monks were killed in the assault on Sera on the twenty-eighth. The British Mission doctor treated 13 wounded soldiers; the mission believed that no other soldiers had been seriously wounded. The mission also reported that it seemed that only a dozen soldiers had been killed. (IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 4 May 1947.)

128. IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 18 May 1947.

129. Anon1, interview.

they would have outnumbered the troops and where the close quarters would have neutralized the soldiers' superiority in arms. They would have had to accept heavy losses to do this but could also have inflicted heavy losses on the army troops. A victory at Trapchi might have resulted in some major concession by the government. Instead, the monks sat in their monastery and let the government troops utilize their overwhelming firepower to crush them. The Sera war, as was indicated above, was a matter of pride and honor more than a logical military venture; not surprisingly, it ended with a complete victory for the government.

THE RETING INVESTIGATION

Reting's interrogation began four or five days after his arrest. The assembly, acting as the interrogating committee, showed him the courtesy of not requiring him to kneel before the members and allowed him to wear his usual robes.[130] At the first interrogation session Reting admitted nothing, telling the delegates only that "although Taktra did not abide by our agreement [to turn power back] and caused much harm to Reting Labrang, I never conspired to kill him. Takra and I are in a teacher-student relationship and I cannot imagine causing him any harm."[131]

At the second interrogation session, Reting told the assembly he would neither accept nor deny any charges at that time, but he assured them he would tell everything to Taktra and repeatedly asked the assembly to arrange a face-to-face audience.[132] The assembly chairmen curtly told him that it was impossible for a prisoner to see the regent but that if he explained everything to the assembly, they would see that the information reached Taktra. The assembly leaders also now told

130. Ibid.

131. Shar rtse (Pebola) 1983: 117. This comes from Pebola's account of Reting's comments after each session of the assembly.

132. Ibid.: 118. At one point Reting even started to prostrate before the assembly to induce them to let him meet with Taktra, but he was forcibly stopped by a monk official, Thubten Sanggye, on orders from a trunyichemmo (Thubten Sanggye, interview.) Apparently Reting believed that if he could obtain an audience with Taktra he could persuade Taktra to view his situation favorably.

Reting that if he did not admit to his crimes they would exhibit incriminating letters he had written.[133] Reting refused to comment.

At the third and final interrogation session, Reting was first shown a selection of the confiscated correspondence dealing with the plans to retaliate against the Taktra administration and seeking help from China. Reting described that session to Pebola: "The main point of those letters was that Taktra was increasingly harming our labrang and we were unable to bear the damage. Consequently, we had no choice but to go on the attack and retaliate tit for tat as best and as timely as we could. Nevertheless, I definitely didn't know anything about the delivery of the bomb."[134] According to Pebola's account, Reting made a distinction between his general approval of retaliation against Taktra and his lack of specific knowledge regarding individual events such as the assassination attempt.

After being shown his letters, Reting realized that there was no point in trying to deny the involvement of his labrang and decided his best hope was to solicit assistance from prominent Tibetans. He asked Pebola and his other jailor, Urgyen Namdol, for a pen and paper and wrote three letters: one to Tricang Rimpoche, the junior tutor of the Dalai Lama; one to Trunyichemmo Chömpel Thubten, an influential monk official; and one to Kapshöba Shape. Reting asked the two guards to deliver these for him secretly, but they turned the letters over to the regent.[135] The letters to Chömpel Thubten and Tricang Rimpoche were basically pleas asking them to work to obtain his release from prison. The letter to Kapshöba, however, appears to have contained a threat to implicate Kapshöba if he did not help Reting. Pebola reported that the letter said: "Since you are aware how the differences between Taktra and Reting Labrang arose from beginning to end, therefore I seek your help in obtaining my release from prison. If I am to continue to be kept in prison and abused, there is no other way but

133. Shar rtse (Pebola) 1983: 118; Anon1, interview.

134. This section in Tibetan is: *ngas rwa sgreng dgon pa nas lha sar dza sag dang nyung gnas bla mar btang pa'i yi ge 'ga' shas de ring tshogs 'dus nga la khyab bsgrags byas byung / ngas tshogs 'dur yi ge'i nang don gtso bor stag brag rgyal tshab kyis nga tsho rwa blar je ngan je sdug byas pa de tsho sdug 'khur thub thabs med gshis / de lan de 'jal skabs 'phral gang 'gab phar rgol mi byed thabs med red ces 'khod yod rung / 'bar mdel skyel rgyu'i skor ngas ma shes thag chod yin.* (Shar rtse [Pebola] 1983: 118.)

135. Ibid.

for it to be unpleasant for both the fish and the water. Please think accordingly."[136]

Reting Dzasa and Khardo Rimpoche soon admitted to all the charges made against them, and Khardo even voluntarily confessed that he had sent assassins to shoot Lhalu in 1945. Consequently, there was no need for a prolonged investigation.[137] Reting's own vision of his fate was discovered among the confiscated letters he had written before his arrest. In one of these, he listed three major mistakes he had made: "Because [my] son Padnam is so young it is difficult to go on the Changtang; taking Tseyangla as Neycam [as his half-brother's wife]; and placing hope in Taktra Labrang; by such acts as these I brought on my own karmic losses [i.e., my own fate]."[138]

On 27 April 1947, ten days after Reting's internment in Sharcenchog prison, and the day of the main assault on Sera Che, the Tibetan Bureau of Foreign Affairs sent the following formal letter of explanation to H. E. Richardson at the British Mission in Lhasa:

> The ex-Regent Reting and his party of supporters sent, with an evil motive, an explosive bomb to be handed over to the Regent Yongdzin Hotuktu Rimpochhe. Reting and all the supporters have admitted their guilt in the presence of the members of the Tibetan National Assembly and have signed statements of admission. Many letters written in his own handwriting by the chief person responsible for planning dangerous

136. Ibid.: 120. In Tibetan: *nga tsho rwa sgreng bla brang dang rgyal tshab stag brag da bar thog mtha' bar gsum du ya 'gal du gyur pa'i skor khyed kyis mkhyen gsal red / da cha nga btson nas thar thabs khyed kyis skyabs 'jug gnang skyong yod pa dang / gal te nga la btson 'jug mnar gcod mu mthud btang na nya dang chu tshang ma mi bde ba yong rgyu las mi 'dug / de lugs dgongs 'jags zhu / gzigs rten gzi cha gcig bcas zhes.* Pebola came to know the contents of the letter when the regent's aide-de-camp Kesang Ngawang asked Pebola to read it aloud because Reting's handwriting was difficult to read and his expressions obscure. Pebola also reported that after he read it, Kesang Ngawang said, "Look at Kapshöba's way of doing things, nothing good will come of it." (Ibid.)

137. Anon1, interview.

138. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. In Tibetan: *bu pad rnam lo na phra bas byang thang du 'gro bskyod dka' ba dang gnas lcam du tshe dbyangs lags blang pa / stag blar re ltos byas pa sogs rang gis rang phung pa'i las 'ba' zhig bsags 'dug.* Tseyangla, a daughter of the Delerapten family, was brought as a bride for Reting's half-brother Thubten Gyentsen. Reting's plan was to make Thubten Gyentsen a lay government official under the name Neysar, and thus Tseyangla was referred to as Neycam, that is, the wife of Neysar. However, she became sexually involved with Reting Rimpoche and was really polyandrous. Her son, Padnam, who at this time was about two years old, is said to be Reting Rimpoche's child. He is now a teacher in Tibet.

> revolutionary activities against the Tibetan Government have come to light and all the members of the Tibetan National Assembly were quite astonished to see them. Consequently, the persons involved were arrested and kept in custody. At this, a section of irresponsible monks of Sera Che Tratsang [college] have risen in arms in support of the evil persons and have acted unlawfully by revolting against the Government and by murdering four persons including their own abbot and other officials. In spite of these serious crimes, the Tibetan National Assembly, including the representatives of the Drepung, Sera and Ganden monasteries have, with unanimous decision, taken only lenient measures against the rebells [sic] and have hitherto shown great forbearance by not taking strong punitive measures to suppress them decisively.
>
> In fact, letters in the actual handwriting of the writer and the statements of admission, signed by the persons concerned in these unprecedented unlawful activities on the part of both Reting and the Sera Che Tratsang can be seen by all.
>
> This is for your information and may please be borne in mind and also be reported immediately to the British and Indian Government's by wire.[139]

The government's case against Reting and his chief officials was airtight, as the public exhibition of the incriminating correspondence between Reting and his officials indicates. Reting may have been grossly misadvised by Nyungne and Khardo, but he was clearly in command of Reting Labrang and could have stopped the plotting. He could not be exonerated.

Deciding on the punishment for Reting and the others was a much more difficult task than establishing guilt. Some members of the National Assembly such as Thubten Lengmön argued that Reting had committed a very serious crime which should be punished according to the legal code introduced by Srongtsen Gampo in the seventh century. This document was brought from the archives and studied. It decreed that for revolting against the king, the criminal "is to be thrown over a high cliff." Others argued that such a punishment was not fitting in this case, since both of the principals in the conflict were lamas. Still others said that since this case was similar to that of Tengyeling in 1899, simi-

139. IOR, L/PS/12/4202; this translation was included in the letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 27 April 1947.

lar punishments were in order; and a number argued that this was a more serious crime, since in this instance not only was the life of the ruler at issue but also the giving away of Tibet territory to China in exchange for Kuomintang military support.[140]

With no consensus, the assembly finally instructed those officials who were responsible for writing the proposed verdicts (such as Lukhang) to prepare drafts for discussion.[141] For eight or nine days these officials wrestled with this issue. Then, on 8 May 1947, without warning Reting Rimpoche died in prison.

RETING'S DEATH

Reting's death shocked and deeply saddened Lhasa. It also raised the obvious question of murder. The surrounding events are confused, but information contained in a recent account written by Reting guard Pebola supports the position that he was killed.

A few days before his death, Reting complained of a slight headache and asked his two guards whether he could be transferred to a less dark and cramped room.[142] The National Assembly refused this request but sent him a doctor,[143] with the stipulation that the guards permit no conversation on any topic other than Reting's health. The doctor examined Reting and diagnosed his illness as *driblung,* a chronic nervous disorder of Reting's. He prescribed a medicine called *agar-so-nga* but told Reting that he would have to ask permission from the assembly to dispense it. Reting agreed that he needed this medicine and asked for a large dose.[144]

140. Anon1, interview.

141. Ibid. Lukhang was responsible for the verdict against Reting.

142. Shar rtse (Pebola) 1983: 121–22. Pebola also said that Lungshar's son grew angry when Reting asked this and told him that compared to the tiny place in which Lungshar's father had been imprisoned, a place so dark you could not see your own feet, Reting's room could be called pleasant. However, while it is not unlikely that Lungshar's son told Pebola this, it is improbable that he would have dared say it directly to such a great lama as Reting. Lungshar's son's account of Reting's last days says only that Reting told him that when the Tengyeling ex-regent was imprisoned in the Potala he was kept in the Deyangshar area, and Reting wanted to be moved there (Lung shar [Lungshar] 1984: 124).

143. A doctor in the traditional Tibetan medical system, Khencung Khenrab Norbu.

144. Shar rtse (Pebola) 1983: 123. In 1944 a British Mission doctor examined Reting in his monastery and said that nothing was somatically wrong with him but that "he

On that same day, at about 4 P.M., Kesang Ngawang, the regent's aide-de-camp, brought the guards three pills, wrapped in paper, for Reting. At 5 P.M., Reting took two of the pills, which the guards noticed were unusually soft and wet and left a yellow stain on the paper in which they were wrapped.[145] After dark, Kesang Ngawang returned to check on Reting's condition and was informed that Reting seemed to worsen after taking the second pill. He instructed the guards to administer the third pill and said he would return later. Soon after Reting took the last pill, his condition became much worse. He began to retch but could not vomit, his breathing became rapid, and he was restless. In a low voice Reting asked the guards to summon the Indian doctor from the British Mission to give him an injection.[146]

At about 11 P.M. Kesang Ngawang returned and was told of the ex-regent's worsening condition and his request for the Western doctor. He shrugged this off, saying that no doctor would come in the middle of the night to give an injection. A few hours later, at about 1:10 A.M., Reting Rimpoche died.[147] During his last hour, his pain seems to have been very severe; a number of officials remember reports that cries of pain could be heard coming from the Sharcenchog prison that night.

The two guards immediately informed their superiors of Reting's death, and the next day they reported the events in detail to the National Assembly as soon as it convened. The assembly asked the guards to submit a detailed written report including all the events from the time Reting became ill until his death.[148] They also appointed a committee comprised of officials from key government offices, the monasteries, and Reting Labrang to examine Reting's corpse for evidence of foul play.[149]

Shakabpa, a member of the committee, recalled:

> I was involved in it [the assembly investigation of the death] and I didn't at all think he was killed at that time.

is mainly a neurotic case" (IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 20 August 1944).

145. Lung shar (Lungshar) 1984: 123–25. The medicine *agar-so-nga* is yellow, but it is not normally soft.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid.

148. Ibid.

149. Anon1, interview; Shakabpa, interview.

> Many people say he was killed by squeezing the testicles but as far as we are concerned we took care to investigate. We sent a group to check Reting's body. This committee included Tsarong, Khenchen Lobsang Tashi, Gyetakba, together with others representing Reting Labrang and Sera Che.
>
> When they returned from this examination, Tsarong told the assembly that there was no evidence that Reting had been strangled and there were no wounds or anything. And as you all know, he said, when we interrogated Reting Rimpoche the interrogation was done by the assembly so nobody hit him even with one finger snap. However, there is a bruise on his back just above the rump. He said it might have been a punishment of a protective deity, and everyone laughed at that.[150]

One member of that committee confirmed Shakabpa's account ar added that the two officials who had guarded Reting insisted that tl committee examine the body thoroughly. He also said:

> I saw all the officials from Reting Labrang who came there shedding tears when they saw Reting's body. The body of Reting was turned over to them. They were told to do the necessary rites and rituals and were allowed to withdraw the needed clothes, food, etc., from Reting Labrang to do this [since it was officially sealed and inaccessible]. . . . When the body reached Shide Monastery in Lhasa . . . it was placed . . . in the main temple and put on display with the face covered by a piece of red silk. Then very large crowds of people from Lhasa came to have a final audience with the body. Everybody was shedding tears and talking loudly to each other with shock and sorrow. People were saying "What has befallen such an extraordinary person. The most radiant and sparkling lama has been reduced to such a pitiable condition. This is a horrible thing, quite unimaginable." We saw a stream of blood flowing from the nose of Reting and spreading all over the cloth covering his body. . . . Reting's body was cremated at Phabongka.[151]

Shakabpa went on to describe the ceremony:

> Then the body was removed in a small palanquin and they put it in a bathtub and washed it and made the necessary treatments to the body. Then they dressed it in monk's clothes and put it on the throne. . . .

150. Shakabpa, interview. Anon1 (interview) corroborates that the bruise was t only mark on the body.

151. Anon1, interview.

> When people talked that Reting was killed I got very upset because I was on the investigating committee and we interrogated everybody, including the bodyguards and supervisors. Each one of them filed an affidavit but there was no such talk at all.
>
> Q. Suppose someone filed a false affidavit saying he was there when he wasn't really there? What do you say about that?
>
> A. When the Dalai Lama went to Yatung in 1950 I was there and having breakfast with Pandatsang and Sambo one morning. Pandatsang said that Reting was killed and I told him please not to say that because we were there during the entire investigation. To this Pandatsang replied, "Chola Chambala [the food server] is here, so why don't you ask him about it?" We called Chambala in and he said the exact same version of the events that he told the investigating committee. Pandatsang was shocked and immediately asked him why he was telling such lies. He said, "Tell the truth now. In Lhasa I have talked to so many people who said that Reting was murdered, so tell the truth." Chambala replied that actually he didn't know what happened because that evening he took leave and went home. Then I [Shakabpa] said, "How could that be possible? You gave a statement in the assembly that you went to get Reting hot water, etc., that night, so how can you say now that you weren't there?" Then Chambala kept quiet. At this time the first suspicion came into my mind. I thought, so this is how they trick people. Until then I never had a doubt and after that I developed suspicion.[152]

Although none of those involved has ever confessed, it now appears very likely that Reting was poisoned.[153] Popular talk in Lhasa at the time claimed that one of the guards, Lungshar's son Urgyen, was responsible; by extension, this also implicated Urgyen's older brother, Lhalu Shape. Pebola's account instead implicates Kesang Ngawang, since he was the one who brought the "medicine" for Reting, and therefore points the guilty finger at the regent and his dzasa. A former Tibetan official recalls talking to Lhalu about Reting's death while both were imprisoned in Tibet during the Cultural Revolution. When he

152. Shakabpa, interview.

153. Although many Tibetans believe that Reting was killed by the squeezing of his testicles, contemporary medical knowledge indicates that this would not be likely to cause death unless the pain had caused Reting to have a heart attack. Such torture could not lead to death in any obvious fashion. Li (1956: 188) incorrectly states that Reting was blinded.

asked Lhalu if he had really ordered the murder of Reting, Lhalu said "How could I order such a thing? One needs an order [*ga*] to do such a thing."[154] In Tibetan this conveys the meaning that a shape could not do such a thing unless he had been given an order from above. The only person who could give such an order was the regent, Taktra or Taktra Dzasa, the regent's manager, who could give an order in the regent's name. The current evidence suggests that Taktra, or, more likely, his manager, perhaps with the knowledge and approval of at least some of the shapes, was responsible for Reting's death.

They certainly had reasons for wanting Reting out of the way. He was a focus of resistance and rebellion for anti-Taktra elements. Always popular and highly revered as a great lama, after his arrest he was even more highly regarded. As long as Reting lived, the regency would live with the threat of a movement to overthrow the government. Reting's desperate attempt to regain the regency using Chinese military power transformed this issue from a matter of internal politics to one with dangerous international connotations. Alive and in prison, Reting might have offered the Chinese an excuse for interfering in Tibetan internal affairs. Li suggests that a wireless message from Chiang Kai-shek asking the Tibetan government to show leniency to Reting may have precipitated the decision to kill him. He may be correct, for the request showed an unusual interest in Reting and was a direct attempt to interfere in Tibetan affairs.[155] It appears that in 1947, when fear of Chinese action against Tibet was widespread, Taktra or his manager decided that the security of the state required that Reting be murdered.[156]

The assembly recommended that Khardo-Rimpoche and Reting Dzasa suffer removal of their eyeballs (as had been done with Lungshar), that Reting's incarnation line be demoted from the rank of Gyetru Hutuktu to that of Tshogcen Tulku, and that all the estates and

154. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
155. Li 1956: 188. Lhalu (interview) confirmed this. Other Tibetans have mentioned such a telegram but were not positive that it existed. Shakabpa (interview) categorically states that no mention of such a telegram ever came up in the assembly's investigation (of which he was a part) and that no letters or telegrams such as this were revealed or discussed. It appears, therefore, that the Kashag never told the assembly of this telegram.
156. Thubten Thuwang, interview.

property acquired during Reting's regency be confiscated. Taktra overruled them, instructing the Kashag to change the punishment as follows: "Although the verdict is reasonable taking into consideration the seriousness of the crimes, I request that the punishment of taking out the eyes be withdrawn for the benefit of the young Dalai Lama's long life. This is my personal verdict." On receiving that order, the shapes expressed surprise at the leniency the regent was showing to the enemies who had tried to murder him, but they changed the punishment to 250 lashes and life imprisonment under the supervision of the Bodyguard Regiment.[157]

Phünkang father and son, Sandutsang, and the old Reting ex-dzasa were all found innocent of involvement in the Reting plot and were released from prison. Their property and ranks were restored.[158]

At this time a number of song commentaries appeared in Lhasa:

> Having bought his *pacö* with 1,000
> [he] put it on on the twenty-fifth.
> The sinful wage for killing the goat
> was to receive the mayorship of Lhasa.[159]

This song refers to Lungshar's son Urgyen. It accuses him of killing Reting and being rewarded for this by being appointed mayor of Lhasa. The first two lines refer to the fact that he had just become a government official (obtained his *pacö* or hair ornament) on the twenty-fifth of the first Tibetan month of that year; and the last two, to his promotion soon after Reting's death.

> *The sinful Porkyo [Urgyen],*
> the bloody-handed one who killed the goat,

157. Anon1, interview. Reting Dzasa (interview) says that Khencung Khenrab Norbu, Shasur, and Liushar intervened to convince Taktra that it would be bad for him to let Khardo Lama and Reting Dzasa be mutilated. They apparently reminded him of the problems faced by the 13th Dalai Lama as a result of his killing Nyagtru Lama in the Tengyeling case.

158. Anon1, interview; IOR, L/PS/12/4202, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 18 May 1947.

159. In Tibetan: *stong gis spa lcog nyos pa / nyi shu lnga la brgyab yod / ra pho bsad pa'i sdig glar / lha sa'i mi dpon blangs yod.*

got the Lhasa mayorship
as payment for killing the goat.[160]

Another version of this runs:

The brave Porkyo [Urgyen],
whose bloody hands killed the goat,
got the red cloak
as payment for getting his revenge.[161]

The red cloak refers to the dress worn by officials of the rank of mayc of Lhasa.

THE MASSACRE AT RETING MONASTERY

While these events were occurring in Lhasa, the sixteen soldiers lef at Reting monastery were alienating the local monks and villagers b their arrogant behavior. The resentment peaked on 21 April (the thir tieth day of the second Tibetan month), when a few soldiers entere the monastery while the monks were holding their monthly Socon Prayer Meeting. The soldiers were told they were not permitted in th monastery during these prayers, but they ignored the monks' admoni tions. This blatant disrespect, observed by all the monks, greatly facili tated the task of a group of militant monks who were secretly agitatin for the monks to take action against the government.[162]

One of the leaders of these monks was Chöntse Tenzin Gyatso, servant of Reting's who had fled from Lhasa on the day of the arrest and made his way to Reting monastery. Another was the enormou Utugba, Reting's umbrella-carrier. When these two learned that th Sera Che monks had killed their abbot and were planning to fight th government, they decided to bring them the weapons and ammunitio

160. *ra pho gsod mkhan lag dmar / sdig can spor kyog kho la / ra pho bsad pa'i sdig gla snang shag mi dpon rag song.*

161. *ra pho bsad pa'i lag dmar / dpa' rtsal ldan pa'i spor kyog / sha lan blangs pa'i sdi gla / kha gyon dmar po byung song.*

162. Rwa sgreng mkhan po 1985: 84.

that had been confiscated (and were under seal) at Reting. They and other Reting monks met and decided also to kill the hated soldiers.[163]

The two main labrang officials, the *decangs,* suspecting that something was afoot, called a meeting of the five chief monastery officials on the day after the Socong Prayer Meeting. They spoke of their suspicion that the monks were planning to fight, and urged the monastic officials to try to persuade the monks that this would be a grave mistake that could destroy Reting monastery. They then called a meeting of all the monks. At that meeting the *decangs* said, "Monks such as Utugba, Tenzin Gyatso, and the Sera Che monk Dorje Je seem to be planning to destroy the government seals. If such a thing is done, it will benefit no one. Our Lama Reting has already been taken, and our labrang is sealed. We can only suffer great loss from such an action, and will gain nothing."[164]

As soon as the *decangs* finished speaking, one monk responded in an insulting manner:

> With a rotten head, the ear can't understand, and with rotten shoes, the feet can't understand. When they came to take our lama you all kept silent and didn't tell us [so we could not help]; you must have been in collusion with them. The soldier's job is to guard the seals, not to abuse and insult us. You with full stomachs [satisfied with the situation] can sleep but we are hungry and cannot sleep. While we were hungry, on top of that, our food bag was stolen. While we were sad, on top of that, we have been scolded. One sadness piled on top of another is what we have gotten.[165]

Other monks made similarly critical speeches but by the time the meeting ended at midnight, the monks appeared to have agreed not to break the seals or to fight,[166] although the militant monks actually still planned to kill the soldiers and seize the weapons.

On the evening of 23 April, the militant monks distracted the guards by having local people ply them with food and beer. They slipped into

163. Thubten Thuwang, interview; Ngawang Trinley, interview.

164. Rwa sgreng mkhan po 1985: 84–85. Jampey Gyatso, then a junior *umdze* (prayer leader), later became the abbot of Reting monastery and is the author of the article cited here.

165. Ibid.: 86.

166. Ibid.

the labrang and, after locking up the *decangs,* took the weapons. Very early the next morning the armed monks surrounded the house in which the soldiers were staying and called to them to come out at once. The soldiers, half asleep, came without even getting fully dressed. As the soldiers appeared, Tenzin Gyatso, Utugba, and the others opened fire and killed most of them immediately. A few managed to get back into the house and started to return the fire. The ensuing shoot-out lasted until noon; in the end, all the troops were brutally murdered.[167]

Although he was now in control of Reting, Utugba, the key militant leader, had been wounded in the leg and was unable to travel to Sera. The rebel monks now altered their plan, reasoning that if Sera did not hold out, many of its monks would most likely flee to Reting and that if they remained where they were, they would be in a position to help them and later to fight.[168] They organized a kind of people's militia in Reting, arming the local monks and peasants with the roughly 100 weapons they had seized.

Rumors that a rebellion had begun at Reting monastery soon reached Lhasa. The government responded by sending two officials to report firsthand on the situation. As these two neared Reting, they heard that the monks and populace of the Reting area had murdered the soldiers and united into a military force. Fearing for their lives, they returned without entering Reting itself, but their report on the situation was accepted.[169] Many in the government wanted to attack immediately to restore order there, but it was finally decided to wait until the Sera Che rebellion had been concluded before opening a second front.

Three days after Sera Che's defeat, the Kashag met with the Trungtsigye and decided that the time was now right for sending troops to deal with the rebels at Reting monastery. One group consisting of 200 infantry, some cavalry, and three machine guns was placed under the command of a Trapchi commander, Shukoba. This unit was to take

167. Thubten Thuwang, interview. Ngawang Trinley says that one soldier managed to escape, but this appears incorrect. For more details of the massacre see Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 54–58.

168. Parts have been taken from Thubten Thuwang, interview, and parts from Ngawang Trinley, interview.

169. The government immediately demoted both officials for failing to carry out their instructions.

the Drigung route in order to attack Reting from the upper part of the valley, blocking the northern escape route. The other unit, headed by the overall commander of the operation, Commander-in-Chief Kesang Tsultrim, also consisted of 200 troops, and had one machine gun and one piece of mountain artillery. This group was to go by the main route to Reting via Phembo Gola pass and attack from the lower part of the valley. These attacks were to be coordinated; an exact time and place were fixed for the two groups' rendezvous. Accompanying the main force were government officials who were instructed to take charge of the property that had once been sealed and was now to be sent to Lhasa.[170]

The local militia in Reting also divided into two groups. A small unit of the toughest monks, including Utugba and Tenzin Gyatso, went to guard the narrow Drigung route, since they expected an attack to come from there. The majority of the force was deployed at Reting to defend the main route, on which a series of barricades had been erected.[171]

The government's plan to launch a coordinated attack did not come to fruition. The main force under Kesang Tsultrim heard reports that heavily guarded barricades had been erected on the main road and in the overlooking hills, and they halted to discuss how to handle these. Since they had no wireless equipment, the Drigung force under Shukoba had no inkling that the main force was delayed. They therefore arrived before the others and exchanged fire with monks who had dug in on the opposite side of a river. All day on 9 May, shots filled the air. Shukoba then decided not to wait for the main force and set out to cross the river alone. On the eleventh, his Trapchi soldiers successfully crossed in yakskin boats and, though they took heavy losses, established themselves on the Reting side of the river. The fight continued, but by the end of the day the monks had lost. Shukoba's troops pushed on to Reting, meeting no opposition at all. The monks and villagers had fled; the troops found Reting monastery totally deserted.[172] Shukoba's

170. Anon1, interview; Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 55.
171. Thubten Thuwang, interview.
172. Rwa sgreng mkhan po 1985: 88–89; Lha klu (Lhalu) 1985: 57; Thubten Thuwang, interview. The leaders, such as Utugba and Chöntse Tenzin, fled into the forests and eventually escaped to China.

troops were in a foul mood when they finally reached Reting monastery. Sixteen of their colleagues had been slaughtered and many had been wounded. In retaliation they tethered their animals in the center of the monastery, set up quarters in one of the chapels, defecated and urinated within the monastery, and looted large quantities of goods.

In the meantime, after a delay of a day or so Kesang Tsultrim's troops marched day and night to Reting, encountering three unguarded, fortified barricades along the way that had recently been occupied—much fresh horse manure could be seen. Snipers shot at them as they marched, but finally they reached Reting monastery—one day after Shukoba's troops had taken it.[173]

In the end, Reting Rimpoche's residence was razed and the government officials brought back to Lhasa everything of value the soldiers had not looted. These goods were placed on sale in Lhasa; people were able to get tremendous bargains if they felt comfortable purchasing items appropriated from Reting.[174] A Lhasa song commented poignantly:

> Reting, the seat of the Kadampa [sect]
> is like an ancient ruin.
> Talungdra's [Taktra's] hermitage
> is like a king's palace.[175]

This song alludes to the fact that Reting's grand residence was completely destroyed and its beams, pillars, and carved wood carted away. Much of this material was said to have been used by Taktra to build a new hermitage for himself.

The Sera Che war ended with the total capitulation of the monks both in Reting and Sera Che. Even in its rather dilapidated state, the Tibetan military had proved that it was able to enforce the authority of the government; the war proved to be a major victory for those who favored a strong central government. However, though Lhasa quickly went back to normal, the enmity between the government and the supporters of Reting Rimpoche remained until the 14th Dalai Lama took

173. Blo gros chos 'dzin 1986: 199–200.
174. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 100.
175. In Tibetan: *rwa sgreng bka' gdams gdan sa / snga mo'i gyang gog 'dra ba / stag lung brag gi ri khrod / rgyal po'i pho brang 'dra ba.*

over the reins of government in late 1950 and began a new chapter in Tibetan history. Taktra was victorious, but he paid a price for his victory: the Tibet he ruled over was hopelessly fragmented, and he stood, not as a symbol of unity, but as a leader despised by a large segment of the officials, monks, and populace.[176] Reting's conspiracy eliminated any chance that Tibet would be able to present a unified front to the inevitable Chinese threat to its de facto autonomy.

176. Kundeling Dzasa, interview. The thirteen-year-old Dalai Lama apparently was himself displeased by Taktra's treatment of the Reting conspirators. For example, it is reported that he watched with displeasure when Reting Dzasa and Khardo Rimpoche were whipped and ordered his *sopönchemmo* attendant to give them food, bedding, and other comforts. He was also very upset when he heard that Reting Rimpoche had died in prison. These events, added to the earlier public humiliation of his father, made the Dalai Lama antagonistic to Taktra and his coterie of advisors—a factor which will become important in late 1950.

15

THE VICTORY CONGRATULATIONS MISSION, 1945–1946

Although Tibetan attention turned inward during the chaotic 1945–1947 period, the international situation did not remain unchanged. The 1944 Gould mission to Lhasa, as was discussed in Chapter Twelve, revealed that the British, though desirous of keeping Chinese influence out of Tibet, were unwilling to help Tibet militarily or diplomatically to secure international recognition as an independent polity. London refused, for example, to support Tibet's inclusion in a postwar conference and would not recognize a Tibetan mission to India. Tibetan disappointment with British "friendship" was increased by the realization that Britain would soon grant India independence and thus lose its close link to Tibet. These factors combined to induce Tibet to explore the possibility of a new rapprochement with China.

SINO-TIBETAN RELATIONS

Sino-Tibetan relations, as we have seen, plummeted in 1942–1943 as a result of a number of issues such as the creation of a Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau, Tibet's refusal to permit construction of a road through Tibet to China, and the conflict between the Tibetan government and Dr. Kung. China, moreover, was in a weak position. Chiang Kai-shek was unable to impose his will on Tibet militarily because of British diplomatic pressure, the war, and lack of control over his border governors, and he feared that if Tibet were included in a postwar peace

conference Britain and the United States would present the truth about Tibet's current de facto independent status and perhaps even bestow upon it jural independence. Chiang therefore altered his approach and initiated a program aimed at regaining the friendship of Tibet and settling the Tibet question peacefully. This new Chinese strategy began in late 1943, when Chiang replaced Kung with an influential and extremely capable Chinese Buddhist named Shen Tsung-lien. The Tibetan government reciprocated by sending a congratulatory message to Chiang Kai-shek at the time of his assumption of the office of president of China in early 1944.

Two incidents in 1944 demonstrated to China that such a rapprochement with Tibet would not be easy. At the same time that Chiang sent Shen to Lhasa, he worked upon the considerable sympathy for China within the monastic segment by sending to Lhasa a Tibetan monk from Amdo, Geshe Sherab Gyatso. Sherab Gyatso arrived in Nagchuka, the main border headquarters in northern Tibet, in April 1944, with an entourage of about fifty Chinese he claimed to be his students. He was carrying a great deal of money and goods, presumably earmarked for distribution in the monasteries.[1]

Geshe Sherab Gyatso was a well-known Drepung monk and scholar who had many influential students in the monasteries and among the aristocracy, including Surkhang Shape. He had returned home to Amdo in 1936 and was active in Kuomintang politics, serving as president of the Association for the Promotion of Tibetan Culture in Chungking and as one of the executive directors of the China Association for the Promotion of Border Culture. In 1942, he had been one of three Tibetan delegates (from the ethnic Tibetan areas under Chinese control) at the Kuomintang Third People's Political Council.[2] Despite this pro-Chinese record, Tibet's open-door policy to monks from China and Mongolia made it extremely difficult to deny him entry. The National Assembly considered the issue and, after several sessions, recommended that on religious grounds, Sherab Gyatso be permitted to enter Tibet. The Kashag, however, convinced that Sherab Gyatso and his so-

1. IOR, L/PS/12/4217, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 14 May 1944.
2. Stoddard ms.

called students would disseminate dangerous Chinese propaganda and therefore act as a destabilizing influence in the monasteries, tried to thwart his visit by recommending that Taktra allow Sherab Gyatso, but not his Chinese students or his loads of goods, to enter Tibet. This recommendation did not contradict that of the assembly but made demands that they expected Sherab Gyatso to refuse. Taktra, although a Drepung lama himself, signed the order. As was expected, Sherab Gyatso would not enter without his companions.[3]

The second incident concerns the size of the entourage of Shen Tsung-lien. Acting on information given them by the Chinese commissioner in Lhasa, in March 1944 the British authorized their embassy in Chungking to issue transit visas through India to Shen and three others in his party. When the Tibetan government was informed of this, they requested that no other Chinese be granted travel facilities, and on 5 April the British instructed their ambassador in China to issue no further visas.

When Shen arrived in Calcutta on 15 April, he had seven companions, all of whom had been issued transit visas in Chungking before the British Embassy had received the instructions of 5 April. Several weeks later, the British government asked Lhasa to allow these eight to enter Tibet, since they had been issued visas in good faith and it would be embarrassing to His Majesty's Government if they were to be turned back after they had come to India. The Tibetans agreed, but the matter escalated when Shen informed the Government of India that he wanted to take an additional three servants from India and that another thirteen persons might be coming from China to join him. The Government of India responded that, in conformity with policy, they would have to receive approval from the Tibetan government for additional permits.[4]

The Chinese angrily summoned the British counsellor to the Chinese Foreign Ministry and showed him two telegrams *in Chinese* that were said to have come from the Tibetan government on 6 and 23 May. These were translated for the counsellor by the Chinese and appeared to contradict Britain's understanding of the Tibetan government's po-

3. Kundeling Dzasa, interview.
4. FO371/41586, telegram no. 6422 from the Government of India to the secretary of state for India, dated 11 May 1944.

sition. The 6 May telegram was said to have denied that the Tibetan government had told the Government of India that the larger entourage for Shen was undesirable. It reputedly said that all thirty-one Chinese would be welcomed at the frontier by officials and guards left there on 26 April. The second telegram said that arrangements had been made to meet and conduct the Chinese group from the Indian frontier. The Chinese told the British official "in firm language that [the] Chinese Government felt [their] party had already been held up over-long. He [Chinese official] said that [the] Chinese Government understood the need for visas for private individuals but Chinese officials could not be left stranded [in] India and these difficulties were not seemly where an official mission was concerned."[5] All of this maqe it appear that the objection to the additional Chinese had originated with the Government of India and that the difficulties were a British machination.

The two purportedly Tibetan telegrams put the British in an awkward position, just as they had feared might happen. Although they wanted to provide diplomatic support for the Tibetans, they did not want it to appear that they hoped to stop the Chinese. They confronted the Tibetan government about the telegrams, and the Tibetans categorically denied the Chinese translation, reiterating that they had never agreed to allow a party of thirty-one to accompany Shen. The Tibetan government sent their Bureau Office in Chungking a telegram on 11 June instructing them that additional Chinese would not be permitted to enter Tibet.[6] The telegram said:

> Regarding entry into Tibet of Shen Chung Lien and his staff. In the first instance Shen Chung Lien, his wife and two servants were accorded permission to come to Tibet. The British Ambassador at Chungking later issued transit visas to four Chinese officers (whose names were given), two wives, one servant and (two cooks and one servant) to be brought up from Calcutta. It was therefore agreed that no other persons than a total of fourteen (1st and 2nd batch) should only be allowed to come to Tibet. The question of granting visas to thirteen other persons and two

5. FO371/41586, part of telegram no. 126 from the British Embassy in Chungking, cited in telegram no. 7514 from the Government of India, New Delhi, to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 4 June 1944.

6. FO371/41586, telegram no. 7777 from the Government of India, New Delhi, to the British ambassador, Chungking, dated 11 June 1944.

wives, who were in Chungking, came up again. We said that as we have already given permission to the first fourteen persons we are unable to give further permission to the fourteen others and two wives.

The Government of India informed the Tibetan Government through the Tibetan Foreign Office that according to our telegrams to the Chinese authorities dated the 3rd and the 6th May respectively, which were shown to the British Ambassador at Chungking, we said that preparations to conduct Shen Chung Lien and his whole party from Tibetan Frontier have been made; and that no telegram was sent to Government of India asking them to stop Shen Chung Lien's remaining party that was to follow later. It is said that we have also mentioned in those telegrams that an official guide with body guards have been sent to the frontier on 26th April to receive Shen Chung Lien and his party of 31. The Government of India asked for a definite reply as to whether the Tibetan Government had undertaken to receive the latter party of Chinese officers.

In our wireless message (in Chinese) to Wu Yon Tang (Wu Chung Hsien), chief of the Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs, we expressed our pleasure at the news that Shen Chung Lien and his party had arrived at Kalimpong. We also said that we had informed all concerned en route on the lines of the telegram sent to him last year, and, that arrangements of guards to meet them at Tromo [Yatung] had been made. We said that in our wireless message to you dated 14th of 3rd Tibetan month (7th April), we have raised no objections to the number of Shen Chung Lien and party coming to Tibet as agreed upon between the Government of India and the Chinese Government. The number of persons as agreed upon between the Government of India and the Chinese Government are: four including Shen Chung Lien himself, in the first instance. Later seven persons whose names were given and three servants to be brought up from Calcutta. We have never consented to allow thirty-one persons to come to Tibet on any occasion except the fourteen persons to whom permission has already been given. It is true that Dr. Kung's successor Shen Chung Lien, never required such a large number of staff. Tibet is a self governing country but its territory is small. In case such a large number of Chinese officers and staff come to Tibet difficulty would arise in obtaining sufficient supplies such as Tsampa [parched grain flour—a staple food], etc., and moreover the Tibetan populace will resent it with suspicion and fear. We have informed the Government of India not to allow more than the fourteen persons as already agreed upon between

> the Government of India and the Chinese Government. You should also approach Wu Yon Tang (Wu Chung Hsien) and persuade him in a best possible way to refrain from sending more than the number of persons as agreed upon and let us know the result.[7]

On the basis of this assurance from the Tibetan government, the British Embassy in China was asked not to issue the additional transit visas to India. The Chinese were furious, and when the Chinese vice-minister for foreign affairs, Wu, discussed it with the British ambassador, Horace Seymour, on 28 June, a considerable argument ensued.

The Chinese vice-minister told the ambassador that a Tibetan representative in Chungking had assured the Chinese that he had received no such telegram as the one reported by the British. Wu's main point was that the Government of India should grant transit visas on official passports as a matter of ordinary international courtesy. The British ambassador pointed out to him that transit visas were not granted when the receiving country specifically asked that they be denied. Wu retorted that since Tibet was not a country this argument was not valid. He urged that India reconsider and said that China would greatly resent it if the Government of India, and not Tibet alone, prevented their passage.[8]

The Chinese vice-minister was probably not lying, but his categorical assertions were misleading. The Tibetan government investigated the source of the Chinese misinterpretation and later explained to the British what they surmised had taken place. Their telegram had been given to the Chinese wireless station in Lhasa on 11 June after being coded. Transmission was then inexplicably delayed for a week. When the telegram was received by the Tibetan representatives in Chungking on 19 June, the message was garbled and they asked for it to be sent again. When the Tibetan Foreign Bureau received the request for retransmission, they recovered the copy of the original message from the

7. FO371/41587, copy of telegram dated the twentieth day of the fourth Tibetan month (11 June 1944) from the Kashag to the Tibetan representatives at Chungking, enclosed in a letter from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 6 July 1944.

8. FO371/41586, telegram no. 160 from the British ambassador in Chungking to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 29 June 1944.

Chinese wireless office in Lhasa. They found this to be correct and suspected that the Chinese had deliberately delayed and garbled the message. The message was sent a second time on 23 June, but apparently had not reached the Tibetan representative when Wu spoke with him.[9]

Despite the displeasure of the Chinese, the British refused to alter their stand. Like the Tibetan government, they were opposed to a strong Chinese Mission in Lhasa and doubted whether Tibet would actually turn back the Chinese if they reached the frontier. They also did not want to renege on their promise to give Tibet diplomatic support against China. As the British Foreign Office put it:

> Our view is that if under pressure from the Chinese we were to disregard the definite request of the Tibetan Government that visas should not be granted we could no longer maintain the position that Tibet is autonomous and give account of our support in maintaining its autonomy. It is suggested that the Ambassador at Chungking and the Government of India should be informed that even if the head of the Chinese Government intervenes His Majesty's Government will take the line that it follows from their recognition of Tibetan autonomy that transit visas must be refused to persons whom the Tibetan Government have said they do not desire to admit to Tibet.[10]

Despite these rebukes, Chiang continued to pursue his new strategy of friendship with Tibet.

CHIANG'S DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE

The instrument for China's new tactical policy was Shen Tsung-lien, the newly appointed head of the Chinese Mission in Lhasa. Unlike Kung, Shen was suave and polite; he made a very favorable impression not only on the Tibetans but on the British as well. In early July 1944,

9. FO371/41586, telegram no. 8902 from the Government of India, New Delhi, to the British ambassador in Chungking, dated 7 July 1944; IOR, L/PS/12/4218, telegram no. 190 from the British ambassador in China to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 15 July 1944.

10. IOR, L/PS/12/4218, minute by Blair (British Foreign Office), dated 21 July 1944.

Shen and his secretary spent the weekend in Gangtok with Basil Gould, the political officer in Sikkim. Gould's report on this visit describes Shen's mission and manner:

> 2. He [Shen] said he had personal instructions from the Generalissimo to work in closest possible co-operation with us (he specially indicated education and medical work) and that he hopes to bring about an agreed frontier between China and Tibet with a large measure of autonomy for Tibet. Generalissimo however, could not regard Tibet otherwise than as an integral part of China and Chinese public opinion would not be able to tolerate a tripartite agreement.
>
> 3. He added that in China there are those who think that once Tibet has been brought within the Chinese fold [the] Chinese Government will be able to deal with Tibet as it likes. He himself however was confident that Generalissimo would estalish relations on a basis which others hereafter would not dare to disturb.
>
> 4. He had heard the suggestion that future status of Tibet might be subject for discussion at Allied post-war deliberations. This would not be acceptable to the Generalissimo and he himself hoped that it might be possible at an early date to present an agreed solution of Tibetan question as an accomplished fact.
>
> 5. Shen strikes me as an able man. His frank and conciliatory manner may go down well in Tibet.[11]

H. E. Richardson, the head of the British Mission in Lhasa, had just spent four years in China in the service of the Government of India and saw Shen's remarks as an example of the "Chinese tendency to believe things are as Chinese theory decrees they ought to be." In a letter to Gould, he noted:

> 2. Talk of co-operation with us in educational and medical work seems to me designed to obtain our help in building up a position which will enable the Chinese to oust us.
>
> 3. The offer of "a large measure of autonomy" for Tibet ignores the

11. FO371/41586, telegram no. 237 from B. Gould to the Government of India, dated 4 July 1944, repeated in telegram no. 8930 from the Government of India, New Delhi, to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 8 July 1944. This policy was also expressed by Dr. T. V. Soong, who told the American journalist A. Steele (who had just visited Tibet) in December 1944 that "the Chinese Government intended to deal gently with Tibet and try to win its friendship." (FO371/46121, letter from H. Richardson in New Delhi, to B. Gould in Sikkim, dated 5 January 1945.)

fact that Tibet has enjoyed complete autonomy for over thirty years, and the objection to a tripartite agreement ignores much that Chinese government have said and done in the past.

4. China's present Tibetan policy is essentially the creation of Chiang Kai-shek, and the argument that once Tibet is brought within the fold relations will be established on a basis that no one will dare disturb, is putting the cart before the horse. In order to bring Tibet within the Chinese fold it will be necessary first to "deal with Tibet as China likes."

5. Talk of Chinese public opinion is eyewash. Public opinion is made in a fascist manner by the Generalissimo, and is his opinion.

6. The matter that is agitating Chinese minds most is clearly anxiety to avoid having the status of Tibet examined by any international body. Hence the urgency of a "fact [*sic*] accompli", and Chiang's new racial theory. It would be most inconvenient if the rest of the world were to realise that Tibet has been independent since 1912 and that, so far from living up to the Atlantic Charter by allowing Tibet the government of her choice, China wants to reduce the degree of freedom already enjoyed by Tibet, and to extend the Chinese Empire.[12]

Shen arrived in Lhasa on 8 August 1944 and immediately made a good impression on Tibetans. He avoided conflicts by refraining from interfering with internal Tibetan affairs; for example, he did not contest Tibetan jurisdiction over cases involving Chinese half-castes.[13] He treated the Tibetans with respect, and, as a Buddhist, used religion skillfully to highlight the similarity between Chinese and Tibetans. He maintained an altar in his house, engaged in Tibetan Buddhist rites, consulted oracles, entertained all the Chinese monks and the abbots of the Three Seats, visisted lamas, asked for teachings, and gave generously to the monasteries. In January 1945, for example, he gave an offering/gift (*gye*) of three *sang* to each of the approximately 20,000 monks attending the New Year's Mönlam Prayer Festival. The British estimated this to be equivalent to Rs. 25,000/–.[14] Shen also apparently

12. IOR, L/PS/12/4218, memorandum no. D.O. 7(4)-L/44, from H. Richardson in Lhasa to B. Gould in Gangtok, dated 6 July 1944.

13. FO371/46123, memorandum no. 3(8)-L/45 from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, reporting a conversation with Surkhang Dzasa, co-head of the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau, about his discussions with Shen, dated 10 June 1945.

14. IOR, L/PS/12/4182, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 18 February 1945.

encouraged Chinese traders to make generous gifts to the monks. The British reported that they had heard one monk saying, "It is only the British who have not made any cash present."[15]

Shen quickly obtained the respect of the Lhasa elite regardless of their political feelings about China. He set up a hospital in Lhasa, gave a long series of lavish parties for all the Lhasa officials, and began to build a large club in Lhasa to serve as a center for cultural activities. Shen subtly promoted the idea that Chinese and Tibetans really saw eye to eye and that it was unfortunate that relations had turned sour. He contrasted the high-handed and vicious policies of the Manchu with those of the new China, frequently telling Tibetans that not only they but the Chinese too had suffered from Manchu oppression, but that now China had rid itself of the Manchu and Tibet and China could again be good friends. He emphasized that in the new China everyone was equal, so that when the Tibetan representatives in Chungking met Chiang Kai-shek they sat and ate on an equal footing with him. He also indicated that the dispute over the Sino-Tibetan border in Kham was due simply to the ignorance of the provincial governors and could easily be settled *if Tibetans would only approach the Central Chinese Government.*[16] He emphasized that now was the ideal time for Tibet and China mutually (i.e., without the British) and peaceably to settle all their outstanding differences.

At the same time that Shen was trying to induce the Tibetans to negotiate directly with China, he made an attempt to engage the British in bilateral talks. In mid-September, he sent a letter to Sir Olaf Caroe, the head of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, in which he hinted that Britain and China could easily settle the Tibetan question (without Tibet):

> Both Sir Basil [Gould] and I were of the opinion that we should do everything in our power to remove any cause for possible friction between Great Britain and China over Tibet. We have amply demonstrated in this war that we are capable of true cooperation and sacrifice in fight-

15. IOR, L/PS/12/4182, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 25 February 1945.

16. IOR, L/PS/12/4218, report of conversation of A. J. Hopkinson with Surkhang Dzasa on 28 November, in an express letter from the political officer in Sikkim, to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 29 November 1945.

> ing a common enemy; and therefore it only befits us that in time of peace we should cherish this invaluable spirit of comradeship and live in perfect harmony. *If Great Britain and China could approach the question of Tibet in this light, I believe there should be no serious obstacle towards the realization of an equitable and happy solution for it.*[17]

In late October, Gould and Shen met in Lhasa. At this time Shen said that his function in Lhasa was exploratory and he had no authority to negotiate with the Tibetans. He indicated he intended to return soon to Chungking to inform Chiang Kai-shek of his impressions. He also expressed the view that it was desirable for *Britain and China* to fix the eastern border of Tibet and to open a motor road between India and China via Tibet. He added that it was unthinkable that China would ever agree to let Tibet control its own foreign affairs.[18]

Gould reported this discussion to Delhi and was instructed to counter Shen's assertion by reiterating that the British position on the preservation of Tibetan autonomy included Tibet's right to conduct foreign relations with the Government of India and by firmly stating that the British had no interest in negotiating with China without Tibetan participation.[19]

In the meantime, Shen in his informal discussions with the ranking Tibetan officials stressed the need for serious talks conducted at the highest levels of government regarding Sino-Tibetan relations. The Tibetan leadership, however, was uncertain how to pursue this issue. On the one hand, the Foreign Affairs Bureau and the Kashag wanted validation of Tibet's de facto independence. On the other, there was considerable sentiment among the monasteries, monk officials, and even some lay officials that restoring a close relationship with China was desirable. Gould related what Surkhang Dzasa, one of the foreign secretaries (see Figure 57), conveyed to him in mid-September 1944:

17. FO371/41589, letter from Shen to O. Caroe, dated 18 September 1944 (emphasis added).

18. FO371/41589, telegram no. 359 from B. Gould in Lhasa to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 27 October 1944, cited in telegram no. 14034 from the Government of India to the secretary of state, London, dated 29 October 1944.

19. IOR, L/PS/12/4217, telegram from the Government of India, New Delhi, to B. Gould, Lhasa, dated 29 November 1944.



57.

Two foreign secretaries: (left to right) Liushar, Surkhang Dzasa (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

> The majority of educated Tibetans wanted to be independent of China but . . . the uneducated, some of whom still think that the Manchu Emperors are in power, believe that what Lonchen Shatra proposed in 1914 is the best that Tibet can hope for. This view, with different overtones, is probably held by many officials. Surkhang thought that it would be better in discussions with China to approach matters not on the basis of the 1914 treaty but from the stand-point of present conditions [de facto independence].[20]

As was indicated earlier, the Kashag decided to test British support on the China issue before deciding on how to respond to Shen's appeal for new negotiations. If Britain had made a firm commitment, the Tibetan leadership might have openly challenged the Chinese view of Tibet's status; but, as we have seen, Britain categorically refused to give assurances of military support. Consequently, the Tibetan government took the opportunity Shen's appointment appeared to represent.

Shen astutely manipulated Tibetan hopes for a de jure settlement of the Tibet question to persuade the government in 1945 to send a delegation to China to attend a National Constitutional Assembly. China's 1936 draft constitution was in the process of revision, after which a nationwide conference was to ratify it and establish the form of the postwar Chinese government. Shen suggested that this conference would be the best time for the Tibetan government to send high-ranking representatives to China to make her position known and settle outstanding issues. Shen's views, as revealed to Surkhang Dzasa, are recounted by him to G. Sherriff of the British Mission in Lhasa:

> Shen told Surkhang Dzasa that there would be two important conferences held in Chungking, one in May and the other in November of this year [1945]. The first one would be preparatory to the second, which Shen described as being of the greatest importance, at which post war settlement and the election of the President [of China] would be discussed. Shen said that representation from all Chinese Provinces would attend these conferences. He did not actually mention Tibetan representatives in this connection, but he incidentally said how important it was that Tibet should appoint senior officials as their representatives in

20. FO371/41589, points arising from discussion with the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau on 16 September 1944, enclosure no. 40 in a letter from the Indian foreign secretary to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 19 October 1944.

> Chungking where now only two very junior officials remained. He insisted that good could come from being represented at these conferences. . . .
>
> I think it is likely that Shen's activities with the monasteries and monks are aimed at getting them to agitate for representation at these two conferences.[21]

In April 1945, Chiang Kai-shek sent a gift of arms and ammunition to Tibet with a letter that said it was not necessary for Tibet to purchase arms and ammunition elsewhere, since China would supply them free of cost.[22] Shen used this as proof that China wanted a powerful and friendly Tibet as her neighbor, pointing out to Surkhang Dzasa that China would not offer arms if it planned aggression. Shen also emphatically supported the prevalent Tibetan view that the British were trying to steal the border area of Tawang from Tibet.[23]

The end of World War II in September 1945 brought further efforts by China to entice Tibet back into the fold. In the Soviet-Chinese Treaty of Friendship and Alliance of 14 August, 1945, China was forced to recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia. Ten days later Chiang Kai-shek issued a statement to the National Defense Council and the Central Executive Committee that was to have a major impact on Tibetan thinking. In part it stated:

> Chinese Government and people should resolve with determination never to imitate way of Japan towards Koreans. We should honestly aid all racial groups which have given evidence of their capacity for self-government and shown spirit of independence. We should help them achieve national independence through self-determination.
>
> If frontier groups have capacity for self-government and strong determination to attain independence and are politically and economically ready for both, our Government should voluntarily help them realize freedom and forever treat them as brother nations and equals of China. We should entertain no ill-will or prejudice against them because of their

21. IOR, L/PS/12/4218, memo from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 2 April 1945.

22. FO371/46122, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 27 May 1945.

23. FO371/46123, memorandum no. 3(8)-L/45, secret news report from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, reporting a conversation with Surkhang Dzasa about his discussions with Shen.

> choice to leave mother country. *Our frontier racial groups should in friendly spirit and through legal channels make known their wishes to the Government of their mother country. In this way they may be able to realise their aspirations.* They would not defy mother country and stir up mutual hatred. . . .
>
> As regards political status of Tibet, Sixth National Kuomintang Congress decided to grant it a very high degree of autonomy to aid its political advancement and to improve living conditions of Tibetans. *I solemnly declare that if Tibetans should at this time express wish for self-government our Government would, in conformity with our sincere traditions, accord it a very high degree of autonomy. If in the future they fulfill economic requirements for independence, the nation's Government will as in the case of Outer Mongolia* [*dealt with earlier in statement*] *help them attain that status. But Tibet must give proof that it can consolidate its independent position and protect its continuity so as not to become another Korea* . . . we must deal with the world's racial questions in conformity with spirit of Atlantic Charter and free peoples' principles.[24]

Shen gave the Tibetan government a translation of this and othe speeches relevant to the postwar status of Tibet,[25] and in late Septembe 1945 he extended the Nationalist Government's invitation to send high-level delegation, perhaps even a shape, to China to attend th coming National Constitutional Assembly.[26]

Simultaneously, the conflict with the Government of India over Ta wang and NEFA continued, and a new dispute concerning Indian trad quotas in cloth led to a Tibetan embargo on cloth that increased th influence of the anti-British, pro-Chinese forces. In addition, the esca lating Reting and Sera troubles, the closing of the English school, an British unwillingness to support Tibet with more than words fed th mounting feeling that Tibet's best chance for long-term security was t reestablish good relations with China. Thus, the Tibetan governmen

24. IOR, L/PS/12/4195A, copy of the English text of Chiang Kai-shek's speec published by Central News on 24 August 1945, cited in telegram no. 945 from th British Embassy in Chungking to the British Foreign Office, dated 26 August 194 (emphasis added).

25. FO371/46123, report from Surkhang Dzasa on a conversation with Shen, in th letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 9 September 1945.

26. FO371/46123, telegram from the Government of India to the secretary of stat for India, London, dated 8 November 1945. The telegram includes information fro the political officer in Sikkim.

decided to send the mission Shen proposed. Fearful, however, of prematurely alienating British support, which, though limited, was all that Tibet had, they decided to keep their China mission secret from the British.

In early October 1945, the Kashag and the trungtsigye developed an ingenious ploy which the National Assembly affirmed on 20 and 21 October.[27] Inspired by the elaborate victory celebrations put on by the Chinese in Lhasa in September, the Tibetans decided to send a Victory Congratulations mission to India and China. Under this guise they would be able to engage in talks with the Chinese and, if necessary, even attend the Chinese National Constitutional Assembly.[28]

THE VICTORY CONGRATULATIONS MISSION IS FORMED

The Victory Congratulations mission was headed by one lay official, Kheme Dzasa (Sonam Wangdu), and one monk official, Dzasa Lama Rong Pelhung (Thubten Samphel). It also included three lower officials: Kheme Rimshi (Tsewang Döndrup), Yeshe Dargye, and Changöba (Dorje Ngudrup).[29] In addition to these five, the Tibetan government sent three replacements for their Bureau Office in China: Khencung Thubten Sangbo, Tsendrön Thubten Tsheten, and Lotsawa Chamba Ngawang.[30] The eight arrived in India in early 1946. They stayed in Calcutta for one day as guests of the Government of India and then on 25 February went on to Delhi, where a house and two military vehicles had been assigned to them.[31]

27. FO371/46123, letter from the British Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 7 October 1945.

28. FO371/46123, telegram no. 9417 from the Government of India, New Delhi, to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 8 November 1945. The Tibetan term for "Victory Congratulations" is *g.yul rgyal brka shis bde legs*. The British records usually refer to this as the "Goodwill Mission." Bya ngos pa ([Changöba] 1983), one of the members of that mission, makes it clear that such talks were the real purpose of the mission. More will be said of this below.

29. They are known in Tibetan as *Dza sag ser skya ngo las [lnga]*, or "[the five:] the lay and monk dzasa and staff."

30. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 5.

31. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 45; IOR, L/PS/12/4226, draft letter from the India Office, London, to the British Foreign Office, London, dated 14 February 1946.

In the meantime, the Tibetan government, with the approval of the National Assembly, drafted a letter to Chiang Kai-shek that was the real point of the Victory Congratulations mission. The letter described the traditional nature of the relationship between Tibet and China, via the Manchu, as one of *chöyön* or "patron and priest" rather than ruler and subject. It said that the selection and recognition of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama should be conducted entirely by the Tibetan government without interference from the Chinese government, and it argued that China and Tibet were different in language, writing, clothes, customs, and so forth. It stated that since Tibet had been managing its own affairs for over thirty years, there was no necessity for the Chinese government to try to participate in Tibetan affairs and that the existence of wireless communications made it unnecessary for China to keep officials in Lhasa. It suggested that China should therefore remove its officers, adding that the British would do the same.[32]

The main obstacle to a Sino-Tibetan agreement in 1914 had been China's refusal to accept Tibet's claim to the de facto border along the Upper Yangtse River, much less to territories east of the Upper Yangtse River that were then under Chinese administration. The new Tibetan proposal actually expanded the terms of the Simla Convention by requesting the return of all the territories inhabited by ethnic Tibetans in Szechuan and Siling (Amdo), many of which had been under Chinese control for several centuries. The most important concession the Tibetan government offered was to declare that they would seek Chinese assistance if threatened by outside aggression.

The 1946 letter from the National Assembly, a nine-point communiqué, merits citation in full as a major Tibetan statement of its position vis-à-vis China:

> To President Chiang-Kai-Shek, and the leaders of the Nationalist Government, including the Chairmen of the five committees:
>
> On the occasion of the great victory achieved this year by the Chinese Government over Japan, after many years of war between the two countries, and upon the termination of war and establishment of world peace

32. From its inception in 1934 the Tibetan government had considered the Chinese Mission in Lhasa a temporary measure it permitted to facilitate continuing Sino-Tibetan negotiations. Although after 1940 the Chinese government began to refer to their mission as a branch of the Chinese Government's Mongolian and Tibet Commission Office, the Tibetans continued to view it as temporary.

and security for mankind, the Government of Tibet is sending a special delegation to China and the Allied Governments of the United States and Great Britain to offer congratulations on the victory. The members of the delegation are: Kucar Dzasa Thubten Samphel of the Lada Treasury, Dzasa Khemepa, head of the Tea and Salt Department, and the three new members of the Tibetan Bureau (in Nanking).

His Holiness Taktra Pandita, the Regent, advised the National Assembly through the Kashag to discuss how the delegation might explore the ways of improving the patron-preceptor relationship—which has been good—between China and Tibet.

Even though this relationship remains special, it has during the past decades deteriorated to the point of hostility. During the reign of the Emperor Kuang Hsu (Shon thong) a large military force led by General Liu Chung of Szechuan was dispatched to Tibet and perpetrated heinous crimes by arresting and killing many people of high and low origin in various regions of Tibet. Invading forces from Soiling, Szechuan attacked the East, South, and North of the Kham region. Many monasteries including Chamdo and Traya monasteries, and villages were destroyed or burned. Finally, in the earth-serpent year (1927), President Chiang-Kai-Shek, through the abbot of Yunggün monastery (in Peking), Dzasa Köncho Chungnay, sent to H.H. the 13th Dalai Lama a good communiqué for improving Sino-Tibetan relations. The President emphasized the need to eliminate past differences and to create a long-lasting diplomatic relationship. He (the abbot) presented a detailed account, and His Holiness—concerned with reconciliation between China and Tibet—sent a series of formal replies. Hoping that the Chinese Government, in keeping with such consideration and intention, would treat this relationship with utmost seriousness. We, the representatives of the three great monasteries of Sera, Drepung, and Ganden, and of the ecclesiastical and secular members of the Tibetan Government, wish to make this statement with good will and sincerity for the benefit of both our countries:

Point 1: the successive Dalai Lamas have exercised temporal and spiritual power in the Snowy Land of Tibet and have been functioning on this earth as the masters of the complete Buddhist tradition. This fact is clearly documented in a series of old and detailed records. At the present time the 14th Dalai Lama, while still a minor, is devoting himself to the (Buddhist) studies, mastering the ocean-wide doctrinal treatises. Until the time when His Holiness will assume the temporal and spiritual power, the Regent Taktra Pandita, who was installed as the unanimous choice of the Tibetan religious and secular communities, continues to

run temporal and spiritual affairs, and we will maintain this good tradition.

We urge the Government of China to seek an unstrained relationship which has its precedent in the patron-preceptor relationship. The Tibetan Government, for its part, shall endeavour to maintain such a relationship with China, as clearly intended by the religious and secular communities of Tibet.

Point 2: Tibet remains the special fountainhead of the precious teachings of Buddha. China and all those who share this sacred tradition and who value it more than life itself should endeavour to promote and expand it. As an independent nation with a dual system of temporal and spiritual rule, Tibet will continue to function independently, maintaining and protecting (this system) and not introducing any new systems which would be harmful.

Point 3: Tibet and Greater Tibet—consisting of the Western Highlands (Tö), i.e., the three provinces of three subdivisions each, the Four Central Provinces in Ü and Tsang, and the Lower (Eastern and Northern) Regions of Kham, the Land of the Four Rivers and Six Ranges—has been a territory unmistakably under the control and protection of the Dalai Lama, the living Bodhisattva of Compassion. There is plenty of evidence to support this fact.

We shall continue to maintain the independence of Tibet as a nation ruled by the successive Dalai Lamas through an authentic religious-political rule.

Point 4: The peace and security of the borders rests on the stable and unstrained relations between China and Tibet. At various times Chinese leaders in the border provinces have seized by force territories which were definitely Tibetan, both linguistically and culturally. This has caused serious disruptions in the maintenance of religious institutions. The territories (so seized) were Batang, Litang, Derge, Nyarong, the five Hor areas, Cagla, Tachienlu, Jun, Gyethang, Mili, Gyarong, the 25 Dimchi areas, Golok, Tongkor, the three Banag areas and Tsadam.

Moreover, the annexation by force of small nations and territories by big ones is against well-known international rules. We urge you to instruct the individual (leaders) to reinstate these territories to us.

The Buddhist monasteries of various sizes in these provinces of China are apparently suffering a great deal from lack of support. The speedy restoration of the endowments and estates seized from them will foster credibility of the Chinese Government in the minds of the Tibetan religious and secular communities. This will chase away the clouds hanging

over Sino-Tibetan relations. The well-being and safety of citizens in these border states will be secured by reducing the size of the security forces on either side of the Sino-Tibetan borders.

Tibet, for its part, will devote itself to religious endeavors and services aimed at assuring the prosperity and stability of the Chinese system of government as well.

Point 5: Tibet has been an independent state, managing its own domestic and foreign, civil and military affairs. It continues to maintain its political and spiritual authority in its own way. Following the tradition established by previous incarnations, the present Dalai Lama as supreme master of the complete Buddhist tradition will exercise His power over the recognition of reincarnate Lamas of high and low ranks belonging to the great and small monasteries of the various orders, over the appointment of the functionaries, and over the reformation of traditions. Neither the Chinese nor any other government should interfere in this.

Point 6: It is in accord with common practice for all residents—native and foreign—to respect the law of the land. Tibet expects them to do the same. Resident Chinese traders (in Tibet), confident of the support of Chinese officials, are creating tensions and disputes over petty matters with callous disregard for Tibetan law. They are thus straining relations between our two countries. Such events have been taking place ever since the Chinese Mission arrived in Lhasa in the Wood-Dog year (1934) for the purported reason of negotiating matters of mutual interest. The Mission was set up by Mr. Huang Mu-sung, leader of the Chinese condolence delegation sent to Lhasa to participate in this nation's religious services held for the deceased (13th) Dalai Lama and in appreciation of the patron-preceptor relationship (between the two countries).

However, since Mr. Shen Tsung has arrived, he has carefully and prudently concerned himself with the maintenance of good relations between China and Tibet. He has, moreover, shown much respect for the Buddhist religion. (Mr. Shen Tsung Lin) is a rarity among Chinese diplomats in Tibet. He now returns home. We urge the Chinese Government to honor him in an appropriate way.

The continued presence of Chinese diplomats causes other nations to compete with one another by seeking to station similar diplomatic missions (in Lhasa). It is not certain how many more will want similar Missions in Tibet. We would like the Chinese Government to have diplomatic discussions channelled through the resident Tibetan Mission in Nanking and by wireless.

Following the 13th Dalai Lama's eight-point relay to President

Chiang Kai-Shek, the two governments agreed to have a Tibetan Mission in Nanking, Peking, and Tachienlu. The Missions in Nanking and Peking have been established. If the Tibetan Mission in Tachienlu were allowed to be established, it would help facilitate efficient communications. This should be allowed to take place soon.

Point 7: In case the need arises to dispatch Tibetan envoys to China we shall do so by issuing them Tibetan government passports. We expect the Chinese Government to recognize only those with authentic official documents. We ask for assurance from your government that it will not recognize any exiled Tibetan monks and laymen who do not carry Tibetan passports issued by our government.

Point 8: The entry into Tibet of any foreign nationals has been strictly controlled in the various border areas. In order to maintain friendly relations between the two countries, Chinese traders and others of various status should apply to the Tibetan government through the Chinese government for entry visas. The Tibetan government will consider the merits of the applications and will issue the visas. (The applicants) will then be allowed to enter without harassment by the local officials. Tibetan traders will apply through the Tibetan government to the Chinese government for entry visas. They should then be allowed to enter China without delay.

Point 9: There are many great nations on this earth who have achieved unprecedented wealth and might, but there is only one nation which is dedicated to the well-being of humanity in the world and that is the religious land of Tibet which cherishes a joint spiritual and temporal system. If the adversaries leave Tibet unhampered and in peace and [do] not continue to hold those formerly seized territories, the nations of the world may not suffer disasters of war, famine and so on by the power of the (three) Supreme Jewels and the guardians of the Buddhist faith. This is of crucial importance for the individual and collective peace and well-being. As you know, this will have great bearing on the stability of the Chinese political system and will also render unnecessary the need for both China and Tibet to station large security forces along their respective borders.

The Tibetan government will endeavour to maintain friendly relations with China in accordance with the deep concern of the 13th Dalai Lama, the Protector and Master, who knew the events of the past, present and future. We shall continue to preserve and protect our joint spiritual and temporal system and our territories as we have done hitherto.

We shall continue to negotiate and settle the border disputes with the concerned foreign governments.

If, however, any foreign governments—with utter disregard for international standards of behaviour—send invading forces across our borders, taking advantage of their superior military might in order to seize our territories, we shall in such an event ask the Chinese government for its support in the interest of the ancient patron-preceptor relationship between our two countries. We urge the Chinese Government to provide such support should the occasion arise.

This straightforward statement has been made without hesitation in the interest of Sino-Tibetan friendship and of elimination [of] the hardship for people on either side of the border, as well as for our mutual benefit, especially that of Tibet which remains a strategic defence barrier between (Asian) nations.

Since the Chinese Government appreciates the Buddhist faith and endeavors to maintain its own security—as do other members of the Allied Governments—we urge the Chinese Government to accept these points and to make a definite commitment by signing an agreement between our two countries.

Signed by the monastic and government official representatives of the Tibetan National Assembly.

Wood-Dog [*sic:* Wood-Bird] Year, 11th Month, 15th Day of the 16th Tibetan cycle.[33]

Sending Chiang Kai-shek such an inflammatory letter was no inadvertency. Surkhang Dzasa told Richardson "that if the letter has been properly translated it is certain to annoy Chiang Kai-shek very considerably, and that, in his opinion, even if the Mission waited ten years they would not get an answer."[34] It is probable that key officials in the

33. Translation by Lobsang Lhalungpa from a Tibetan copy of original letter. "Independence" in this text is the translation of the Tibetan term *rang dbang*. Khe smad ([Kheme] 1982: 82–85) and Bya ngos pa ([Changöba] 1983: 4), both of whom participated in the delegation, mentioned aspects of this letter, as did the British in FO371/53616, translation of a Tibetan letter from the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau to the British Mission in Lhasa, dated the eleventh day of the second Tibetan month (Fire-Dog year), corresponding to 12 April 1946.

34. FO371/53616, memorandum from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 16 July 1946.

Kashag and the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau did not perceive this letter as a viable initiative, but refrained from comment so as not to appear hostile toward the monk-dominated rapprochement sentiment. The Tibetan government's plan was for the mission to leave China before the Chinese National Constitutional Assembly began if Chiang Kai-shek responded quickly;[35] if he did not, the delegation would participate in the Chinese meeting on a informal basis, not as delegates but as observers.[36]

The British obtained information from China that the Tibetan Victory Congratulations mission was planning to attend the Chinese meeting, and they informed the Tibetan government in December 1945 that such an action would conflict with Article IV of the Simla Convention and would damage Tibetan autonomy.[37] The British attitude confirmed the Tibetan government's suspicion that Britain might try to sabotage bilateral talks with China, so they repeatedly told Britain that the mission had no such plans. Moreover, in order to preclude the possibility that the critical letter to Chiang might fall into the hands of the British while the Tibetan mission was in India, they took the unusual precaution of sending it overland through Derge Sey (Kesang Wangdu), who had just been appointed acting commander of the Tadang Regiment stationed in Markham and was about to leave for Kham. He personally delivered the letter to the Tibetan mission in Nanking in May 1946.[38]

THE BRITISH REVIEW THEIR TIBETAN POLICY

In January 1945 the British Foreign Office decided to review their Tibetan policy in the light of the issues raised by the Gould mission in

35. Changöba, interview.
36. FO371/63315, report of press statement made by Thubten Samphel of the Tibetan mission to Indian and U.S. reporters on 7 December 1945, cited in a telegram from the Indian agent in Nanking to the Government of India, New Delhi, undated.
37. IOR, L/PS/12/4226, telegram no. 10441 from the Government of India, New Delhi, to the political officer in Lhasa, dated 21 December 1945; IOR, L/PS/12/4226, telegram no. 9947 from the Government of India to the secretary of state for India, dated 1 December 1945.
38. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 19; Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 78.

1944. They asked the Government of India for their views. The reply, in September 1945, recommended a more aggressive policy encompassing the following points:

> (1) The maintenance of the Tibetan buffer is a matter of the utmost importance for India both from the point of view of defence and in the interests of India's internal defence.
>
> (2) Tibet should enjoy internal autonomy and the right to conduct direct foreign relations (both of which she enjoys at present), while recognizing Chinese suzerainty by more or less ceremonial formalities.
>
> (3) Support for Tibetan autonomy should be by the *strongest and most outspoken diplomatic pressure,* to be increased at the present time (apart from other advantages this would satisfy Tibet that our action in the McMahon areas is only our assertion of our treaty rights and in no way designed to break up the state of Tibet), by publicity for the realities of Tibet's position over the last 33 years, and by the supply of munitions and equipment if sought by the Tibetan Government.
>
> (4) There may be advantage in bringing the position of Tibet before the United Nations, but it is realised that the Chinese may be able to render such a course ineffective. This matter, and the possibility of an open declaration by His Majesty's Government of their attitude in the Tibetan question, must be left to His Majesty's Government to determine.[39]

The India Office in London felt that the plan of putting Tibet's position before the United Nations should be left in abeyance, since it appeared to have no reasonable prospect of success. They also felt that a decision to exert strong pressure on the Chinese government on Tibet's behalf and to give new publicity to Tibet's status should be deferred at least until after the visit of the Victory Congratulations mission. And while the India Office had no objection in principle to continuing to supply munitions to Tibet, they recommended that before new action was taken a complete review of the situation should be made by the Indian General Staff, including the possibility of "limited military support by land and air which it might be possible to offer to

39. IOR, L/PS/12/4195A, letter from the Government of India to the India Office, dated 19 September 1945.

Tibet in the event of her territory being threatened by unprovoked aggression by a Foreign Power."[40]

When this recommendation was passed on to the Foreign Office, its Far Eastern Department, surprisingly, sided with the more activist proposal of Delhi. The department considered Chiang's apparent offer to Tibet in his speech of 24 August not irreconcilable with the British position, and felt it would be unwise to ignore the situation.[41] As the following note indicates, the department saw the Tibetan mission to China in a most positive light:

> The visit of the Tibetan mission to Chungking seems to afford an opportunity to raise this issue which is too good to miss. But only Tibetans can broach the autonomy question with the Chinese. We cannot broach it for them or in any way treat with China about Tibet over the latter's head. But we can give our diplomatic support once the issue is broached
> the Government of India should give the Tibetan mission a *positive lead over this question* and encourage them to discuss the autonomy issue with the Chinese when they get to Chunking, in which case they would be given full diplomatic support by us.[42]

This view did not prevail as Ernest Bevin, the foreign minister, did not want to escalate Britain's support of Tibet. J. C. Sterndale Bennett of the British Foreign Office summarized Bevin's decision in a letter to the India Office:

> As regards the Government of India's proposal that support for Tibetan autonomy should be given by the strongest and most outspoken diplomatic pressure, if only to satisfy the Tibetans that our action in the McMahon area is not in any way designed to break up the state of Tibet, Mr. Bevin considers that our action in the McMahon area should be allowed to stand on its own merits. He feels that the moment is inopportune for His Majesty's Government to take the initiative in raising the question of Tibetan autonomy, and that it is preferable that the Tibetans

40. FO371/53613, letter from the India Office (E. P. Donaldson) to the Foreign Office, dated 8 January 1946; FO371/53613, note by the Far Eastern Department (G. Kitson) of the Foreign Office on the status of Tibet, dated 2 February 1946.

41. FO371/53613, minutes by N. Brewis and G. Kitson (Foreign Office), dated 21 January and 23 January 1946.

42. FO371/53613, note by G. Kitson, Far Eastern Department, Foreign Office, on the status of Tibet, dated 2 February 1946.

> should be left to initiate the matter themselves, should they wish to do so. . . . As regards the question of putting the position of Tibet before the United Nations, Mr. Bevin is of opinion that this is not a question which could suitably be brought before the United Nations.[43]

Bevin did agree that publicity could be given after the Tibetan Victory Congratulations mission arrived in India and that a military review should precede sales of arms and munitions.[44] It appears that Bevin's reluctance to approve a more activist policy was motivated by his belief that any deep involvement by Britain in the Tibet issue might attract the attention of Russia and the United States, with possible awkward repercussions. In the end, then, rather than receiving the strongest and most outspoken diplomatic support, the Tibetans were left on their own.[45]

The British also decided against granting military aid to Tibet, even though the initial recommendation had indicated that military aid was feasible. As was mentioned above, the India General Staff had been asked in February 1946 to review the strategic questions involved in defending Tibet against aggression, or, as they put it in their report, "Should it prove impossible to preserve Tibetan autonomy by diplomatic methods alone or should RUSSIA or CHINA attack TIBET, it might be necessary for the Govt of INDIA to provide direct military aid to TIBET which would involve war. The purpose of this paper is to study the extent and manner of direct military aid that could be given to TIBET in pursuance of the political object."[46] After a thorough investigation, they reported their conclusions in mid-July. On the ability of the Tibetans to help themselves, the report said:

> (a) . . It must be stressed that the TIBETAN will to help themselves depends on the strength of the Indian Govt, and the diplomatic support it gives to TIBET.

43. FO371/53613, letter from the British Foreign Office (J. C. Sterndale Bennett) to the India Office, dated 23 February 1946.
44. Ibid.
45. FO371/53613, minute by G. Kitson on a meeting held with E. Bevin and others to discuss the Foreign Office's position, dated 20 February 1946. As the Foreign Office put it, "[We] should leave the Tibetans to handle the autonomy issue themselves with the Chinese, if they wish." (Ibid.)
46. FO371/53615, top secret report, Chiefs-of-Staff Committee of the commander-in-chief, "Aid to Tibet, Final Paper," dated 27 April 1946.

(b) *If a small TIBETAN force, about one mounted infantry brigade group, were trained and equipped on modern lines, it would enable TIBET to impose some delay on the RUSSIANS, and possibly to hold up altogether CHINESE forces advancing on the routes from CHAMDO and NAGCHUKA.*

(c) The necessary training could be provided by giving selected Tibetan officers and NCOs free instruction in INDIA.

(d) Equipment and replacements would have to be provided from outside Tibet either free or at a token cost.

(e) A small military mission resident in TIBET would also be required. Its task would be to help the Tibetans in matters connected with the modernization of a part of their Army; and to make preparation for the reception of our forces should they be required. It would also urge on the Tibetans the importance of organising and arming guerilla bands in the NORTH and WEST. In war it would act as the liaison link between the British Commander in the field and the Tibetan Government.

On the Tibetan and British capabilities it said:

They [the Tibetans] could however seriously delay a CHINESE advance, and with air support, modern equipment and training, would probably defeat it.

(a) We [British] can deploy forces in SE TIBET quickly enough to forestall the RUSSIANS, and with better and shorter air supply lines, could probably defeat any RUSSIAN attacks by deploying equal or even smaller forces.

(b) We would probably not be able to forestall the CHINESE at some key points EAST of LHASA if the TIBETANS imposed no delay, but we would have little difficulty when assisted by the Tibetans, in destroying any CHINESE invaders.

The report concluded that:

23. The TIBETAN Government should be approached with a view to arranging the training in INDIA of a nucleus of officers and NCOs to modernise a force sufficient to impose considerable delay on an enemy brigade operating on one of the two main approaches to LHASA. A mounted brigade group of about 3000 men, would be sufficient. Suitable modern equipment for a force of this nature should be provided free or at a nominal cost by the INDIAN Govt, and replacements for that equipment should be on the same basis. Two or three supervisory officers should reside in TIBET as a Resident Military Mission.

24. The maximum aid that can be given to TIBET is one air supplied and air transported div with offensive air support. Some long range bombing of a strategical nature could also be done, probably with slight effect.[47]

The Joint Committee of the Chiefs of Staff and Air Headquarters reexamined the report and came to a different conclusion. They decided that "with existing types the operation of aircraft to and from the high altitudes of TIBET would be impracticable" and sent their recommendations to the Government of India:

(1) The committee re-examined a paper circulated . . on the above subject and agreed that, with existing types, the operation of aircraft to and from the high altitude of TIBET would be impracticable. Until, therefore, aircraft of suitable types became available the whole plan contained in [the report] would be impracticable, and until such time as the Russians or Chinese have such aircraft or rockets it would be extremely difficult for them to operate from TIBET against INDIA.

(2) From a short term point of view there is no practicable means of aiding Tibet against a major enemy and there is no real threat to India from that direction.

(3) When and if it becomes possible to operate aircraft to and from Tibet, the Committee consider that a plan of the nature of the one under consideration would seem to be the only method by which Aid to TIBET could be given.[48]

The Government of India agreed and notified the War Staff at the India Office, London, that:

In view of the opinion now expressed by the General Staff, that from a short term point of view there is no practicable means of aiding Tibet against a major enemy and that there is no real threat to India from that direction, the Government of India do not propose further to consider at present the possibility of offering military assistance to Tibet. They will, however, continue to meet as far as possible reasonable requests for the supply of arms and ammunition.[49]

47. Ibid. (emphasis added).

48. FO371/53615, extract from minutes of meeting of 23 May 1946, by Col. A. MacDonald, secretary, Chiefs-of-Staff Committee of the Commander-in-Chief, dated 24 May 1946.

49. FO371/53615, letter from the External Affairs Department, Government of India, New Delhi, to the under-secretary of state for India, London, dated 19 July 1946.

The Foreign Office concurred. Whether or not Tibet would have been able to avail herself of a military offer like that mentioned in the initial report is uncertain because of the serious internal political problems Lhasa was then undergoing. But Tibet had no chance to consider this, for Britain once again decided not to change her Tibet policy.

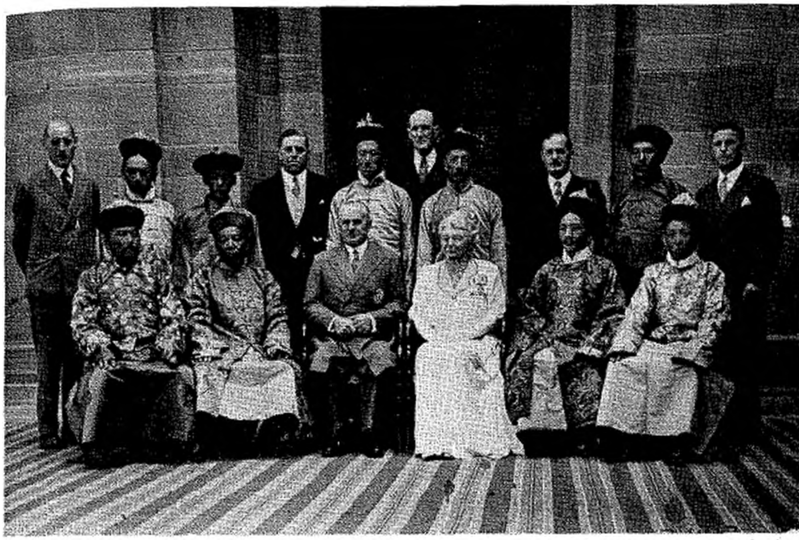
The British H. E. Richardson, a consistent friend of Tibet, understood the Tibetan dilemma and in 1948 wrote a very sympathetic analysis of the situation surrounding the Victory Congratulations mission to A. J. Hopkinson, the political officer in Sikkim. Speaking of the motives of the Tibetan government, Richardson aptly summed up the Tibetan perception of British policy:

> They hope to speak a word in their own cause through the mouths of their Mission. They hope by avoiding the issue of any orders to the Mission about the Chinese Assembly to escape an open breach of the 1914 Treaty. One must make allowances for this disingenuous tortuosity from people placed in such a difficult situation as is the Tibetan Government—an anachronism without material strength trying to keep up with opponents who are rapidly becoming modernised and with their only source of support in a Government which deliberately limits its promises of help to diplomatic support (only translatable into Tibetan as "words").[50]

THE VICTORY CONGRATULATIONS MISSION IN INDIA AND CHINA

On 2 March 1946, a few days after the Tibetan officials arrived in New Delhi, the British arranged an elaborate ceremony for the presentation of the letters and gifts to the viceroy (see Figure 58). The mission then visited George McRell, the American ambassador in Delhi, and presented letters of congratulation, photographs, and gifts from the regent and the Dalai Lama for U.S. President Truman. McRell served the Tibetans tea and snacks, and invited them for dinner and a movie a few days later.[51] While in Delhi, the Tibetan mission also had dinner at the residence of the Chinese ambassador. During their three weeks in

50. IOR, L/PS/12/4226, letter from H. E. Richardson in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 17 April 1946.
51. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 6–7.



58.

The Victory Congratulations mission in India: (left to right, front) Thubten Sangpo, Targang, Lord and Lady Waverly, Kheme Dzasa, Kusantse (2 March 1946) (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

Delhi, Hopkinson showed his fear that the Tibetans would attend the Chinese National Constitutional Assembly and wanted to delay their departure; he went so far as to suggest that they go to China by sea.[52] His display of concern created an unpleasant disagreement with the Tibetans.

After Delhi, the Tibetan mission visited several Indian cities and then returned to Calcutta to prepare to leave for China. In Varanasi (Benares), an exceptionally hot Indian city, several of the Tibetan delegates broke out with pimples on their faces, hands, and legs. Rai Bahadur Sonam Tobten, a Government of India official who was accom-

52. IOR, L/PS/12/4226, draft letter from the India Office to the British Foreign Office, dated 14 February 1946.

panying the delegation as a translator, called in a doctor who told him that it appeared that the Tibetans had a serious infectious disease. Those affected took the physician's advice to return directly to Calcutta for a thorough examination, while the others continued on to Bombay.[53]

In Calcutta, Hopkinson had the ill Tibetans examined and then told them they had a highly contagious disease that was difficult to treat in a hot climate. He suggested that they return to Gangtok for treatment and warned that they might be put in quarantine if they remained in Calcutta.[54] The Tibetans' suspicions were aroused because the British doctor did not give them the diagnosis directly, but relayed it through Hopkinson. They discussed the pimples with other Tibetans and Chinese, all of whom said that such pimples were very common in people from cold climates when they first experienced the extreme heat of India. The Chinese doctor whom they consulted on their own confirmed their belief that the pimples were not symptoms of an infectious disease. They concluded that Hopkinson was trying to obstruct their trip to China. When they told Hopkinson that they did not have an infectious disease and would not go to Gangtok, he angrily tried to change their minds.

The British records discuss this "illness incident" in some depth, but there is no indication in the correspondence that they had thought of using the illness to prevent or delay the Tibetans' departure to China. Hopkinson, however, may well have tried to effect this on his own.

The Tibetans decided to make their own arrangements. They contacted Chen Ku-tang of the Chinese Lhasa Mission, who was returning to China from Tibet, and he arranged for them to move from the Great Eastern Hotel to China House, a hostel run by the Chinese consul-general in Calcutta. The Chinese Consulate in Calcutta then made all arrangements for their trip to China; and in early April 1946, the delegation, with Shen, Gyalo Döndrup (the Dalai Lama's brother), and Phüntso Tashi (the Dalai Lama's brother-in-law) left by plane for China with travel documents issued by the Chinese Consulate.[55]

53. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 7–8.
54. The Tibetans understood this to mean something like being arrested and put in jail (ibid.).
55. Ibid.: 10.

They arrived in Nanking on 7 April 1946 and were met by the two staff members of the Tibetan Bureau Office, as well as by the secretary of the Chinese National Assembly and the head of the Chinese government's Mongolian and Tibet Commission Office.[56] The Chinese press did not give them much notice, but described them as arriving "to attend the coming National Assembly" and to "represent Tibetans in paying respects to President Chiang Kai-shek for his leadership in the war of resistance against Japanese aggression."[57]

The Tibetan delegation had sent the Victory Congratulations gifts by sea, so they could not immediately make the formal presentation. They visited Shanghai and other nearby areas while waiting for the gifts. After a few weeks, the gifts arrived and the Victory Congratulations ceremony was held in an auditorium of the Chinese government. After the ceremony Generalissimo Chiang and his wife hosted a lunch for the Tibetan mission.[58]

The Tibetans could now begin on the real purpose of their visit. The letter to Chiang Kai-shek had been translated into Chinese by the Tibetan Bureau Office in Nanking and was given to the Chinese as soon as the Victory Congratulations ceremony was over.[59] The Tibetan government had instructed the delegation to say publicly that they had no plans to attend the National Assembly and afterward to give the impression that they attended only because they happened to be in Nanking when it was being held.[60] As was mentioned above, the delegation had been instructed to leave China before the assembly began if they had received a reply to the nine-point letter by that time.[61]

56. At this time the Kuomintang were in the process of shifting their capital back from Chungking to Nanking. The Tibetan staff members were Thubten Tshenleg and Thubten Sengge.

57. FO371/53614, translations from the Chinese press cited in telegram no. 11 from the British ambassador in China to the British Foreign Office, London, dated 2 May 1946.

58. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 12–13.

59. Ibid.; Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 78. Thomas (1951: 75) reports that the mission tried to give the letter to the Chinese Foreign Office, but they refused it since China did not consider Tibet a foreign nation. They insisted that the letter be conveyed to the Mongolian and Tibet Commission Office, and apparently this was done.

60. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 15.

61. Changöba, interview. Kheme, one of the two leaders, denied having received orders to attend: "Though we had no orders to attend the meeting from the Government of Tibet, there were a large number of other Tibetans who are not from the Tibetan

In the past only Tibetans from areas under Chinese control (Sikang, Tsinghai, and Yunnan provinces) attended national assemblies. Now, for the first time, the Chinese were on the verge of having delegates from the Tibetan government participate in a Chinese National Constitutional Assembly, and they had no intention of discussing the status of Tibet seriously before then. For Kuomintang China, the propaganda value of this participation was immense. The Chinese therefore told the Tibetans that they would discuss the issues in their letter gradually and suggested that they visit other parts of China since there was going to be a delay of a few months before the start of the National Assembly.[62] The Tibetans tried to press the Mongolian and Tibet Commission Office during this period for an answer to their letter, but were told that they should attend the National Assembly and present their views there. The Chinese went so far as to tell them that since other Tibetans would be attending, it was important that they let their views, that is to say, the views of the Tibetan government, be heard.

The delegation took the Chinese advice and went sightseeing to other parts of China. They appeared never to have had a true grasp of the function of the meeting, believing until the end that it might involve discussion of border issues and the Tibet-China dispute. For example, the monk-official leader of the mission, Thubten Samphel, told the British Embassy in China that the Tibetan mission "thought it likely that Chiang Kai-shek would not see them and discuss the frontier question unless they first put their case before the Assembly."[63]

When the start of the long-awaited assembly was announced for 15 November, the Tibetans looked forward to presenting their case.[64] Just

Government and they may cause a lot of confusion and problems if they acted as if they were the real representative of the Tibetan Government. Because of that we decided to attend the meeting." (Khe smad [Kheme] 1982: 83.)

62. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 82–83. The Tibetans appeared not to realize that the postponement was a desperate, and ultimately futile, attempt on the part of the Kuomintang to secure Communist and Democratic League participation in the National Assembly.

63. IOR, L/PS/12/4226, comments of Dzasa Lama Thubten Samphel to the British ambassador, cited in letter no. 100 (97/212/46) from the British ambassador in China to the British Foreign Office, London, dated 25 October 1946.

64. Bya ngos pa ([Changöba] 1983: 14) says it began in the latter part of December. The Tibetans apparently did not know or care that they were dealing exclusively with the

before the conference began, the mission telegraphed Lhasa, explaining what had transpired and asking for detailed instructions. The Kashag replied that while they should attend the meeting, they were not permitted to vote or even clap their hands; in other words, they were instructed to act as observers rather than delegates. However, they were told they should make sure no reference to Tibet's status or the Tibet question was made in any of the resolutions. The Tibetan leaders called together all the members of the delegation and informed them of these instructions.[65]

After about ten days of plenary sessions, the assembly was divided into committees to discuss and recommend various sections of the constitution. The Tibetans from China and Tibet were placed with delegates from Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang, as a part of the Eighth Examination Committee, headed by General Pai Chung-hse, the Defense Minister. Tibetan mission leader Thubten Samphel accepted election as a member of the Presidium of the National Assembly. A meeting between an official of the British Embassy and the heads of the Tibetan mission reveals that even in late November the Tibetans still believed that the National Assembly would discuss the Sino-Tibetan border issue. The report of this meeting said: "When I [the Embassy official] asked if the function of the National Assembly was not merely to adopt a constitution, they [the Tibetan Mission] made the somewhat surprising assertion that the constitution would deal with the frontier matter in which they were interested."[66]

The discussions on the specifics of the constitution were set to begin on 9 December. Most of the issues were of purely domestic concern,

Nationalists; since the Communists and the Democratic League had declined to participate, the meeting was essentially a Kuomintang party affair (Clubb *1964: 278*).

65. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 15. Li (1960: 191) presented support for this when he wrote, "In response to the invitation [from the Chinese government] they dispatched delegates to Nanking. Upon their arrival, ***however, these Tibetan delegates took the position that they had received no power to discuss the draft constitution.*** " (Emphasis added.)

66. IOR, L/PS/12/4226, report on visit of an official of the British Embassy to the Tibetan mission, cited in a telegram from the British Embassy, Nanking, to the British Foreign Office, dated 27 November 1946. The report indicated that the Tibetan mission said they were attending the assembly and serving on the Presidium to prevent their views being misrepresented by the Chinese Tibetans. Cf. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 15–16.

but one item, number 4, read that "all the people of the countries whose delegates are present in this Assembly are subjects of the Chinese Kuomintang Government." On seeing this item, the Tibetan mission wired the Kashag in code on 6 December, informing them that although they would oppose this resolution, decisions were taken by a majority vote and they probably could not block its passage. They asked Lhasa for instructions.[67]

The Kashag immediately summoned the trungtsigye and informed them of the situation.

> All present were shocked and astounded by the information. The Tsipons headed by Lukhangwa recommended firm action and they were seconded by the Trungyik Chhempos. The Kashag with their usual caution considered that the matter should go to the Tibetan National Assembly but the Tsipons and Trungyik Chhempos advised that as the matter was urgent [since the meetings were starting on the ninth] a decision should be reached at once.
>
> 4. Eventually, immediate instructions were decided upon and a draft telegram sent to the Regent at 9:30 p.m. He approved it without hesitation.
>
> 5. The telegram instructs the Tibetan officials to state at the right moment that they cannot accept resolution no. 4. They are to say that they had actually been sent on a congratulatory mission and that in order to remove misunderstanding and to create friendly relations between the two governments they had handed a note of 9 points to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. As they received no reply to that note they had attended the National Assembly with a view to securing a reply by restating their 9 points. If the Chinese Government continue to take (*sic*) action on resolution no. 4 instead of giving the Tibetan officials an opportunity of saying what they have to say, they will have no alternative but to withdraw from the Assembly.
>
> 6. The Tibetan government have also instructed their Mission that if they have to withdraw they should make it plain that they are the only authorized representatives of the Tibetan Government and that if anyone else tries to speak on behalf of Tibet after their withdrawal such speakers

67. IOR, L/PS/12/4226, memorandum no. 9(2)-L/45, from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 9 December 1946. This is a report on "information obtained privately from a thoroughly reliable source." Bya ngos pa ([Changöba] 1983: 15) wrote that they wired the Kashag for detailed instructions.

> will not be genuine. The Tibetan officials have also been ordered to give wide publicity to their withdrawal if it becomes necessary.[68]

Meanwhile, at the meeting a dispute arose over a point in the constitution that listed Tibet and Mongolia as parts of the Chinese polity that were to be permitted to continue to exercise "autonomy."[69] The Tibetans were unable to delete that item in the meeting, so they protested to General Pai Chung-hse, the head of the committee. They went to his quarters and told him that it was not proper for Tibet to be included in the Chinese constitution. They reminded him that they had already given a statement on Tibet's status to the Chinese government. Pai replied that "China is like a corporation in that there are different components such as the Han, Manchu, Mongolians, Hui and Tibetans. Because China is the owner of these, there is nothing wrong with the Tibetan Question being included in the constitution."[70] Apparently the Tibetans did persuade the Chinese to make one change. Kheme mentioned that the Tibetans vigorously protested to Chiang Kai-shek about inclusion of this status for Tibet and that a change in the wording was eventually made from "the Tibetan District System" to "the Tibetan Self-Government System."[71] Li confirmed that a change was made, but said that it was from "Tibet's local autonomy shall be decided by law," to "Tibet's autonomy shall be duly guaranteed."[72] At the same time, however, the constitution made provisions for Tibetan representation in future National Assembly meetings.[73]

68. IOR, L/PS/12/4226, memorandum no. 9(2)-L/45 from the British Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 9 December 1946. The memorandum mentions that "the Tibetan Government have worded their instructions very well," so it appears that Richardson was shown a draft of the instructions.

69. The Tibetan term used by Bya ngos pa ([Changöba] 1983: 16) is *rang skyong*.

70. Ibid.: 16–17.

71. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 84–85; IOR, L/PS/12/4226, telegram no. 1467 from the agent of the Government of India in China to the Government of India, New Delhi, dated 23 December 1946. The Government of India's agent was present at the session at which Chiang proposed the amendment cited above (FO371/70046, report on the Tibetan Goodwill Mission by H. E. Richardson of the British Mission in Lhasa, dated 8 January 1948).

72. Li 1960: 191.

73. The Chinese government requested the Tibetan government to elect and send representatives to a session of the Chinese National Assembly in autumn 1947, but the Tibetan government refused, saying they had never done this before. When China repeated their request, the Tibetan government told them to inform their representatives

As the assembly was drawing to a close, the Tibetan delegates wired the Kashag for instructions on how to avoid signing the final document. They were told not to make an issue of it but, rather, to circumvent the question by leaving Nanking and going somewhere on a tour. The two leaders immediately left for Shanghai.[74]

By the time the National Assembly ended there was still no reply to the Tibetan letter, although the Tibet and Mongolian Commission Office established a small committee to study the letter. The two dzasas tried to influence the study by giving gifts of gold to important members of that committee,[75] but there was no official word from China as 1946 came to a close.[76]

After the New Year's celebrations of 1947, the Tibetans again pressed the Chinese about the letter. This time the Chinese government replied; however, they apparently saw nothing of value in the Tibetan note and did not respond to specifics. They merely requested that the Tibetan government appoint a special representative with decision-making authority to settle issues such as those mentioned in the letter. The two dzasas, of course, had no such authority. They wired Lhasa for instructions, saying at the same time that they could do no more and wanted to return home. Lhasa agreed, and in the spring of 1947 the mission went to India and then returned to Tibet.[77]

In retrospect it is clear that the Tibetans had been badly outmaneuvered by the Chinese. Tibet failed both to keep Tibet out of the new Chinese constitution and to begin serious negotiations over the issues of territorial and political status. The Tibetans' unsophisticated attempt at foreign diplomacy was counterproductive. The letter was certainly popular in Tibetan politics, since it stated Tibet's desire to remain de facto independent and to reunite all Tibetan-speakers under Tibetan rule, but by attending the National Assembly and being displayed in Chinese newspapers, the mission had given the Chinese a choice prop-

in China if anything required discussion. (FO371/70046, report on the Tibetan Goodwill Mission by H. E. Richardson of the British Mission in Lhasa, dated 8 January 1948.)

74. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 17.
75. Ibid.: 20.
76. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 85.
77. Bya ngos pa (Changöba) 1983: 20.

aganda victory which they were to use in the United Nations debates over Tibet in 1950. Despite encouraging rhetoric from Chiang Kai-shek, postwar China showed no willingness to grant Tibet an independent status under nominal Chinese suzerainty. Thus, in the early months of 1947, as the Reting rebellion began to unfold, Tibet's external problems remained unsolved.

16

FURTHER ATTEMPTS AT INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY

While the Victory Congratulations mission was in China and the internal situation in Lhasa continued to worsen, the government also had to consider the effect on Tibet of India's upcoming independence.[1] In early June 1946, the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau called on the British Mission in Lhasa and inquired specifically about India's future and its relevance to Indo-Tibetan relations. H. E. Richardson, although he had no official instructions, felt it was important to alleviate Tibetan apprehensions and told them:

> 5. I said that I saw every reason to believe that any future government of India would want to maintain and improve, if that were possible, the existing relations between Tibet and India. I mentioned the religious connection and pointed out, I hope with some justification, that there are many people in India who remember and cherish the fact that India sent to Tibet many of the greatest teachers in the history of Tibetan Buddhism.
>
> 6. Surkhang [of the Foreign Affairs Bureau] asked whether Tibet would have to refer questions to the government of India or whether they could continue to refer to His Majesty's Government. I said that

1. For example, in late May 1946 the British reported that Pandatsang, one of Tibet's largest traders and an influential, forward-thinking official, told them he thought Indian independence would drive Tibet toward China. (FO371/53615, letter no. D.O.7(3)-P/46, from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, no date but received in New Delhi on 10 August 1946.)

> they would certainly have to have relations with the Indian Government in matters concerning India and Tibet. . . .
>
> 7. Surkhang said that they were anxious about what might happen if independent India was unable to defend herself. . I replied that it was probable that the defence of India would be covered by a treaty with His Majesty's Government by which H.M.G. might assist Tibet.[2]

Richardson's unofficial explanation was soon followed by an invitation from India for Tibet to send a delegation to a conference of Asian countries in New Delhi. In contrast to the disastrous Victory Congratulations mission, this delegation turned out to be a resounding success for the Tibetan government.

THE ASIA RELATIONS CONFERENCE

The transition to an independent Indian government was begun in September 1946, when Jawaharlal Nehru joined the interim Indian government as vice-president and member in charge of external affairs.[3] At about the same time, the Indian Council of World Affairs decided to convene a semi-official conference of Asian countries the following spring.[4] In that way, as Nehru later explained to the Tibetan delegates, India could begin to expand her relationships beyond London to all countries, especially those in Asia.[5]

Delegates from academic circles and observers from governments from thirty-two countries were invited. The invitation to the Tibetan government was conveyed by the British representative in Lhasa, who told the Tibetans that this would be a good opportunity publicly to demonstrate Tibet's de facto independence before all the neighboring Asian countries.[6]

2. FO371/53615, letter from H. E. Richardson (British Mission) in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 9 June 1946.
3. Dutt 1977: 74.
4. FO371/63539, dispatch no. 13 from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the secretary to the Cabinet, London, dated 30 January 1947.
5. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
6. Ibid.

The Tibetans appointed Teiji Sambo and Khencung Lobsang Wangchug to lead the delegation, which left Lhasa in early March 1947.[7] Unsure of the nature of the conference, the Tibetan government hoped that it might deal with postwar border delimitation, so they sent along seven or eight boxloads of original documents relating to the Indo-Tibetan border dispute.[8]

When the delegation reached Calcutta, they heard disquieting rumors that the Chinese were objecting to their presence on the grounds that there was no need for a Tibetan delegation—the Chinese could make all decisions for Tibet. Fearing a humiliating rebuff, the Tibetan leaders sent several servants to Delhi to find out whether arrangements had been made to accommodate them, that is to say, whether they were still invited to attend. The servants discovered that the Chinese government had indeed made such a protest but that the Indian government had not withdrawn its invitation to Tibet.[9]

The full Tibetan delegation then went to New Delhi, where they met Nehru and gave him letters from the Kashag and the regent. They told Nehru they had brought relevant treaties and documents with them and wanted to discuss these with him before the conference began, but Nehru informed them that no political decisions were going to be made and asked them not to raise any issues regarding borders or political status.[10] The Tibetans also visited Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian foreign minister.[11] The only political talks they had, however, were with the foreign minister about Indo-Tibetan trade issues.[12]

7. The other members included two interpreters, Kyibu and Kapshöba Sey, and Tsidrung Kunga and Sambo Sey. Two scholar monks (*geshes*) also went in case any discussions or questions arose regarding religion (ibid.).

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.; FO371/63540, telegram no. 266 from the British ambassador in China to the British Foreign Office, dated 13 March 1947; FO371/63539, telegram no. 357-S from the viceroy-general of India to the secretary of state for India, London, dated 26 February 1947; FO371/63539, telegram no. 249 from the British Foreign Office to the British ambassador in China, dated 6 March 1947.

10. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

11. Gandhi told the Tibetan delegation in a private meeting that they were publishing a brochure about the conference which would be sent throughout the world and would serve as documentary proof of Tibet's independence (ibid.).

12. The Kashag had instructed the delegation to request the Indian Foreign Office to rescind the rule whereby Tibetans needed permits from the political officer of Sikkim to buy such items as cloth, yarn, thread, or cigarettes, since Tibetans were being required

Several days after their arrival in Delhi, the Chinese ambassador invited the delegation to a party at his embassy and tried to induce them to operate through him. He told the Tibetans that the Chinese government was doing its best to resolve the Indo-Tibetan border issue and was talking with the Americans, British, and Indians about this (China had, in fact, complained to the Government of India in 1946 about NEFA). He said to them, "We the Chinese feel that it is better that you let us talk and handle this border issue. It will be more effective and more influential if we talk about it." He also said that because the Tibetans had had to face many difficulties traveling to the conference from Tibet, Chiang Kai-shek had instructed him to give each of the representatives Rs. 10,000/- in spending money and each of the other staff members Rs. 5,000/-. Teiji Sambo thanked the ambassador for his concern but told him that the Tibetan government had provided sufficient funds. With regard to the border issues, Teiji Sambo repeated what Nehru had said but added that the Tibetan delegation had brought all the relevant documents; if these issues should be raised, the Tibetans would discuss the issue themselves.[13]

A few days later, a Chinese official came to the Tibetans' residence with a message that Chiang Kai-shek personally wanted them to have the money. When the Tibetans again refused, the official said that he could only accept this refusal as final if Teiji Sambo would himself cable Chiang Kai-shek saying that he would not accept the gift. The Tibetans, amused at the Chinese fear of being accused of not trying hard enough, in fact sent such a telegram to Chiang.[14]

The conference itself was uneventful. Tibet was seated along with the other delegations and, like each of them, had its national flag on its separate table. Teiji Sambo made a short speech to the conference just as members of other delegations did, and the Chinese made no attempt to interfere. From the Tibetan point of view, attending an international conference as an equal with China was a major recognition of their de facto independent status. The only concession the Chinese could win

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to give gifts (bribes) before such permits were issued and this was causing hardship (Ibid.).

13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.

from India was the withdrawal of a map of Asia that showed Tibet as separate from China.[15]

When the delegation reached Kalimpong on the return journey, they found a telegram informing them of the Reting conspiracy and ordering them to stay in Kalimpong until the Reting trouble was over. They were instructed to cooperate with the Victory Congratulations mission (which had also been told to wait in Kalimpong) and to keep a close eye on the activities of the Reting Labrang's trading company there.[16]

INDIA BECOMES AN INDEPENDENT STATE

While Richardson was trying to allay Tibetan apprehensions about the creation of an independent Indian state, the Indian government reviewed its Tibet policy and decided to downgrade Tibet's importance for India. The British had believed the maintenance of a political buffer in Tibet to be critical to India's security, but the new Indian leadership saw as essential the development of a pan-Asian order led by India and China acting in close cooperation. Tibet clearly represented a stumbling block in this schema.

> 7. The Government of India have now reviewed their attitude towards the political relationship between China, Tibet and India and have decided to adopt for the present the following line of policy, which has been made known to the Political Officer, the British Mission in Lhasa and His Majesty's Secretary of State for India.
>
> (a) The conditions in which India's well-being may be assured and the full evolution be achieved of her inherent capacity to emerge as a potent but benevolent force in world affairs—particularly in Asia—demand not merely the development of internal unity and strength but also the maintenance of friendly relations with her neighbours. *To prejudice her relations with so important a power as China by aggressive support of*

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid. They were also instructed to find out if it would be possible to get the British to agree to deport Simpönla, the head of Reting's company located in Kalimpong, as well as to confiscate Reting's property and turn it over to the Tibetan government. To this end Kapshöba's son was sent to Calcutta to consult with a lawyer. However, while information was being transmitted to Lhasa regarding the options, Simpönla got wind of the danger and fled to Nepal.

> *unqualified Tibetan independence is therefore a policy with few attractions. It follows that, while the Government of India are glad to recognise and wish to see Tibetan autonomy maintained, they are not prepared to do more than encourage this in a friendly manner and are certainly not disposed to take any initiative which might bring India into conflict with China on this issue. The attitude which they propose to adopt may be best described as that of a benevolent spectator, ready at all times—should opportunity occur—to use their good offices to further a mutually satisfactory settlement between China and Tibet.*[17]

On the other hand, the Indian government wanted Tibet to agree that India had succeeded to all British rights in Tibet, since that was the only basis for its control of the NEFA area. After much debate on how to present the new Indian state, Britain and Delhi each sent the Tibetan government a special message explaining its government's position. These messages reached the Tibetan government on 26 July 1947, less than three weeks before Independence Day, on 15 August.

The British message stated that the good relations that had existed between Tibet and Great Britain would be continued by the Indian government, upon whom would devolve the rights and obligations deriving from existing treaty provisions.[18] It also tried to lessen Tibet's apprehensions by stating that, first, Britain would "continue to take a friendly interest in the future prosperity of the Tibetan people and in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy," and, second, that the British high commissioner in Delhi or a member of his staff would pay periodic visits to Lhasa as a means of continuing friendly relations between the two countries.[19]

17. FO371/63943, report on Indo-Tibetan relations up to August 1947, prepared by L. Fry, Office of the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India, dated 7 November 1947. A memo (signature illegible) from the India Office to the under-secretary of state for India further said that the Indian government had decided to take a stance of "benevolent neutrality to both parties, ready to use their good offices to further a mutually satisfactory settlement between Tibet and China." The memo went on to say that the Indian government did not intend to make any public declaration of this. (IOR, L/PS/12/4210, memo from [signature illegible] to the under-secretary of state, dated 2 May 1947. The contents of the memo were based on a letter from India's External Affairs Department to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 8 April 1947.)

18. FO371/70046, annual report of the British and Indian Mission in Lhasa for the year 1947.

19. Ibid.; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 392–93; FO371/70043, draft memorandum on the proposed British mission to Tibet, dated September 1948.

The Indian message was very similar. It said that the Indian government assumed all relations on the basis of existing treaties until such time as either country might wish to enter into fresh arrangements. It also gave assurances of continued friendship and interest in the preservation of Tibetan autonomy.[20]

These communiqués and the impending transfer of power in India raised a major policy dilemma for Tibet. Although anxious to know the extent to which it could still rely on Britain, and also whether India would continue Britain's policy of support, some officials felt that this was an opportune time to renegotiate issues that were detrimental to Tibet's national interests. These officials wanted to rectify such matters as: (1) the use of the terms "Chinese suzerainty and Tibetan autonomy" in the Simla Convention—these terms, they felt, should be replaced by "Tibetan independence"; (2) the return of areas of Tibetan population that had fallen under the control of British India (e.g., NEFA, Sikkim, and Darjeeling); and (3) trade and economic arrangements that Tibet felt to be unfair. A major debate ensued regarding how Tibet should respond to the Indian communiqué. Richardson noted in his annual report for 1947 that the Kashag had asked him "whether other countries in a similar position to theirs were negotiating new treaties with India."[21] Richardson, who stayed on as head of the renamed India Mission in Lhasa following Indian independence, believed that the transfer of power "should occur as quietly as possible, so as to avoid attracting unfavorable attention from the Chinese" and met with leading Tibetan officials to convey this view.[22] He recalled the first days following independence:

> I was received [at the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau] as usual with friendliness and ease. They were all old friends whom I used to meet individually and socially over many years. We had a talk of about 2½ hours. They said they needed time to consider the position and asked me informally whether they should not treat the old relations as ended and ask for a new treaty. It was obviously important for the Indian Govern-

20. FO371/70046, annual report of the British and Indian Mission in Lhasa for the year 1947. In reality, of course, this really meant "interest" that did not threaten Nehru's dream of friendship between China and India.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

> ment to get Tibetan acceptance. I advised them to accept the continuation of relations on the old basis and to avoid any opportunity for the Chinese to step in on the pretext that Tibet had no relations with any power. I said that if they felt they must they could say they would ask for discussion about adjustment of details later.[23]

But Tibetan feelings ran strong on this issue. One group argued forcefully that if Britain could say it was wrong for Britian itself to keep control over India, then should not India admit that it was wrong for India to hold traditional Tibetan territories such as Tawang, Darjeeling, and Sikkim? This group, which appears to have included Kapshöba Shape, saw India as weak and divided and felt that if Tibet made a strong case at this time it could regain the ethnic areas lost over the previous century and a half. Moreover, this faction argued that if Tibet did *not* make these claims now, she would lose her right to claim them later. Thus, there was strong pressure within the Tibetan leadership not to let this opportunity to redress the border issue escape.[24]

This policy, however, carried the risk of alienating the new Indian leadership, a development that could, as Richardson had warned, leave Tibet without any formal relations with a foreign country. The Simla Convention of 1914 had formed the basis for Tibet's international identity, such as it was, and abrogating Simla and the McMahon Line might result in Tibet losing not only its "legal" international status but the sympathy and support of Britain and India. These dangers led the Tibetan government to send an official note of congratulations to the British governor-general and Nehru on the occasion of the transfer of power, but the note did not express Tibet's acceptance of India as Britain's successor, since there was no consensus in Lhasa at that time.[25] The Tibetan government referred the India matter to the National Assembly, about which Richardson reported:

> By the 26th of August [1947] I had private information that the National Assembly had decided to reply, welcoming the messages from the Government of India and agreeing to abide by the existing treaties for

23. H. E. Richardson, personal communication, 14 May 1984.
24. The Tibetan government had not, of course, been informed of the shift in Indian attitude toward the Tibet question.
25. H. E. Richardson, personal communication, 14 May 1984.

> the present but stating that there were certain matters concerning frontiers and commerce which they would like to discuss later. There was some pressure in the Assembly for immediate revision of the treaties but this was overcome by the Executive who sent a draft to the Kashag on the lines outlined above.[26]

Due to the Dalai Lama's procession to Drepung, which included the shapes, the decision on how to respond to India's note was delayed until September 1947. Richardson was then sent a message from the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau for transmission to Delhi that pointedly failed to agree to abide by existing treaties or to accept India as Britain's successor, but which, significantly, did introduce a new dimension by specifically making territorial claims on India, giving Sikkim and Darjeeling as examples of such areas. The Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau realized what a hard line they were taking and tried to cushion the blow by explaining to Richardson that their request was similar to that in the nine-point letter sent to China with the Victory Congratulations mission.[27]

Richardson considered this message to be a serious mistake and decided to seek clarification before transmitting it to Delhi. Because the letter had no Tibetan text (usually official letters were written in Tibetan with an English translation appended) and had come unsealed, he asked the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau whether the message was from the entire Tibetan government or just the Foreign Affairs Bureau, and whether Tibet intended to abide by the existing treaties. The Tibetans did not respond and simply sent the communiqué via telegraph directly to New Delhi.[28]

However, in typical Tibetan fashion, the government avoided a direct confrontation with the Indian government by making no attempt to terminate the British treaty rights in Tibet which India now claimed. Thus, on 15 August 1947, when the British trade agencies and missions in Gyantse, Gartok, Yatung, and Lhasa replaced the Union Jack

26. F0371/70046, annual report of the British and Indian Mission in Lhasa for the year 1947.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.; H. E. Richardson, personal communication, 14 May 1984; H. E. Richardson, interview.

with the Indian national flag, the Tibetan government said nothing and continued to deal with them as if no change had occurred.[29]

On 16 October, the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau finally replied to the British communiqué:

> We have been informed in detail by Mr. Richardson the Indian Trade Agent Gyantse of the contents of your message by wireless. We would like to express our gratitude for your message which states that His Majesty's Government will continue to consider any further maintenance of Tibet's independence and common welfare of her people as they have done so hitherto. In view of cordial relationship existing between Great Britain and Tibet in order to further promote our friendly relations the Government of Tibet is also considering that United Kingdom High Commissioner himself or his Representative should visit Lhasa from time to time on being informed of such visits when necessary.
>
> Regarding our request to return of excluded Tibetan territories gradually included into India and regarding trade relations affecting general economic welfare of Tibet we have discussed the matter with Government of India when India was under British administration. And it becomes (two groups omitted—?necessary that) Government of Tibet must continue the negotiations with new Government of India in near future. Hence we hope that His Majesty's Government will also support and help us in achieving our desire.[30]

This note conspicuously used the term *independence* rather than *autonomy,* and it referred to Tibet's request that India return Tibetan territories included in India. Although Britain had no intention of supporting either of these issues, and particularly not the second,[31] a British official in the Foreign Office's China Department interpreted Tibetan recalcitrance in accepting India as the British successor in a positive way: "It looks as if Tibet is becoming vaguely conscious of the violent nationalism around her, and feeling the need to assert her own

29. H. E. Richardson, personal communication, 14 May 1984. This approach to diplomacy parallels the Tibetan government's willingness to allow the British Mission and the Chinese Mission in Lhasa to remain, without giving them formal permission, but just considering them to be temporary missions with no permanent status.

30. F0371/63943, cited in letter to E. P. Donaldson of Commonwealth Relations Office from L. Fry (Office of the United Kingdom High Commissioner, Delhi), dated 7 November 1947.

31. Ibid.

position. She will be able to do this by playing off India against China, if she wants to, and if she is prepared to send Tibetans abroad to learn something of the world."[32]

Tibet had in fact already decided to send its first official mission to the West. This mission, the Tibetan trade mission, was to visit America and the United Kingdom, in addition to India and China.

THE TIBETAN TRADE MISSION

Tibet's first international mission turned out to be one of the most controversial episodes in modern Tibetan history. From the Tibetan viewpoint, it gave clear evidence that Tibet was recognized as independent by the United States and the United Kingdom by virtue of their acceptance of the trade mission itself and the Tibetan passports they carried.[33] In actuality, however, while the mission demonstrated again that Tibet had some sort of international identity independent of China, the nature of that identity was far from clear.

The idea of sending a trade mission abroad originated with the Trapchi mint in the summer of 1947. Jointly headed by Tsarong Dzasa, Trunyichemmo Cawtang, and Tsipön Shakabpa, this office had been trying for some time to induce the government to take steps to back up Tibet's paper currency with gold. Shakabpa recalls their argument:

> In 1947 there was very little of either grain reserve or gold. Tsarong was worried about this situation, since we were continuing to print new currency. He used always to say that the paper money had to have some hard backing . . . that a currency note means that the government guarantees the value of the note in gold or some other commodity. . . . He also used to talk about a foreign country where all the people suddenly came and asked to change the paper money in silver and gold and the government had nothing so the finance minister had to commit suicide.
>
> So the three of us [heads of the Trapchi mint] discussed this a lot and decided to request that the Kashag authorize us to buy gold and silver.

32. F0371/63943, minute by Peter Murray, dated 24 November 1947.
33. Shakabpa 1967: 295.

> Since the cost of these was very high in India, we thought it would be better if we bought the gold directly from England or the United States. We presented this plan to the Kashag . . . and they called the trungtsigye to meet with them. In turn they decided it should be approved by the National Assembly so a meeting of it was convened. I spoke for the plan there but the most effective spokesman was Tsarong Dzasa. He told the assembly [particularly the abbots] that whatever money the monasteries and monks have from doing religious services, etc., just now is merely paper. In case something happens and you or the monks bring this paper to us to exchange for valuable objects such as gold or silver, then I have nothing to give to you or them. When other nations issue currency notes they can be redeemed and the government maintains an amount of gold and silver equal to the amount of notes issued. But since we do not do that here, the money you hold in the monasteries is nothing more than a piece of paper.[34]

As Tsarong had anticipated, the abbots were immediately concerned for the safety of their monasteries' money and the proposal for a trade mission was quickly approved. The mission, however, actually had multiple goals. In addition to purchasing gold abroad to secure Tibet's currency, the government was extremely eager to gain direct access to foreign currency.

Before World War II, Tibet had no need for its own U.S. dollars or pounds sterling, since there were no restrictions on importing goods from foreign countries or on buying foreign goods with rupees. This changed dramatically during the war, leaving Tibet totally dependent on the Indian government for hard currency and foreign goods.[35]

Tibet's export economy consisted almost entirely of wool, furs, yak tails, and musk; about 80 percent was exported to India and 20 percent to China. Wool was by far the major export item, and the United States was the largest final purchaser of this wool: about half of Tibet's exports to India were sold to U.S. agents in India for export directly to the United States. The rest were sold to Indians who may have resold them abroad. The foreign exchange from the U.S. agents was paid into the

34. Shakabpa, interview.

35. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-748, letter from Shakabpa to Secretary of State George Marshall, dated 7 August 1948.

Reserve Bank of India, which credited rupees rather than dollars to Tibet's account there.[36] The Tibetans estimated that these exports amounted to about two to three million U.S. dollars per annum and felt India was cheating them out of this foreign currency. Thus, a second aim of the trade mission was to negotiate some sort of arrangement with India so that Tibet would receive hard currency for these exports.

Because Tibet had no standing reserves of foreign currency, a third task of the mission was to secure dollars or pounds sterling from India so that the Tibetan government could buy gold from the United States. A fourth task was to explore the feasibility of Tibet entering into direct trade relations with the United States and England, thereby avoiding the dollars-to-rupees issue entirely. The Tibetan government also saw the trade mission as an excellent opportunity to publicize their position that Tibet was independent of China. In keeping with this aim, they issued official passports to the members of the mission and instructed them to try to use them when traveling.[37]

Headed by Tsipön Shakabpa and including Khencung Changkhyim, Pandatsang Rimshi, and Surkhang Depön, the trade mission left Lhasa in November 1947 for India, the first leg of their journey, and arrived in New Delhi in early December (see Figure 59).[38] The mission quickly raised the issue of trade and foreign currency with Prime Minister Nehru and with K. P. S. Menon and H. Dayal of the Indian Foreign Office. At this time Shakabpa asked India for 2,000,000 U.S. dollars.[39]

36. F0371/70046, minutes of a meeting with the Tibetan trade mission held at the U.S. Treasury, dated 6 December 1948.

37. Shakabpa, interview. While these passports are often called Tibet's first, Tibet had issued similar documents to Lungshar (and the four students) for travel to England in 1913, and British entry visas had been affixed to these. A document was also issued to Phala Sey in 1925.

38. Li (1960: 197) says that since Surkhang was a military man (a commander), "one might presume that their talks were not confined to commercial matters." This inference is certainly incorrect. In Tibet, the rank of depön was not dependent on being part of a military establishment or on prior training or aptitude. Surkhang was selected as the interpreter for the mission because he knew English and was the younger brother of Surkhang Shape. Connections and his knowledge of English, therefore, not any secret military goal, led to Surkhang's being made a part of the delegation.

39. A. W. Selby (Office of the United Kingdom High Commissioner in New Delhi) reports in a letter that he heard from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs that "the Tibetans have however asked the Indians for 2 million dollars 'as a start' which is clearly fantastic." This amount is confirmed in a number of letters and conversations with Shakabpa, e.g., in FO371/70042, letter from A. W. Selby in Delhi to E. P. Donaldson, Brit-



59.

The Tibetan trade mission of 1948: (left to right) Pandatsang, Shakabpa, Changkyim, Surkhang Rimshi, Ratna (photo courtesy of India Office Library and Records, British Library)

The Tibetan point of view, common in landlocked countries, is articulated clearly in later letters Shakabpa sent to U.S. officials:

> Before the war, goods of all countries were abundant in Tibet because Tibet could buy all kinds of goods from India or China. Also there were

ish Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 9 January 1948; in USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/1-849, memorandum of conversation by L. Henderson (U.S. ambassador in India) with Shakabpa, dated 5 January 1949; and in USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-3148, letter from Shakabpa to U.S. secretary of state, dated 31 August 1948.

> no restrictions on the foreign exchange remittances to and from other countries. After the war, it became difficult for goods to be imported to Tibet. And restrictions were imposed on the remittances to and from other countries by the Governments of India and China through which countries Tibet has been importing and exporting goods—thus entailing much difficulties to the people of Tibet.[40]
>
> Since the last war, the Government of India put a number of restrictions on the import and export of goods to and from India and at the same time tightened their control on foreign exchanges. Curiously enough, the Government of India applied these restrictions and controls on the exports and imports of goods from and to Tibet—in spite of the fact that Tibetans use the port of Calcutta only as a centre through which goods are sent and brought to and from other countries of destination and origin, and that these goods are only in transit to and from such countries.
>
> While we were in New Delhi, we raised this matter with the Government of India and demanded that, in as much as we are using the port of Calcutta as transport centre only and in as much as the Tibetan products from Tibet are only in transit to other countries through India, they must not withhold the U.S. dollars which the Tibetans earned from export of Tibetan products and that Tibet should be free to import American goods with these dollars.[41]

Nehru and the Indian government immediately took this opportunity to demonstrate to Tibet their displeasure over Tibet's refusal to recognize the new Indian government as Britain's successor. Reiterating that they were the legal inheritors of the treaty rights and obligations of British India and expressing the hope that Tibet would continue to maintain relations with the new government as they had with the British Government of India, they indicated that questions about new agreements between the two countries should be examined *after* the traditional relationship was reaffirmed. The immediate need, they argued, was *for Tibetan and Indian relations to be put on some official*

40. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/2-2448, letter from Shakabpa to E. Anderberg, attaché, United States Embassy in Nanking, dated 20 February 1948.

41. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-748, letter from Shakabpa to Secretary of State G. Marshall, dated 7 August 1948.

basis.[42] It was obvious that the Indians would not deal with Tibet on these currency issues unless it accepted the new Indian state as the successor to Britain. India agreed at this time only to release enough foreign currency to cover the everyday expenses of the mission abroad.[43]

The trade mission had no authority to enter into negotiations with India on political issues. They sent a series of four coded telegrams to the Kashag informing them of the stalemate and urging action to break the deadlock. Accepting India as Britain's successor, however, was a very sensitive issue in Lhasa and no direct reply was forthcoming. After about a month, in early January 1948, the Kashag ordered the delegation to leave for China to continue their mission. The delegation indicated that they would continue the discussions with the Indian government regarding trade and currency when they returned.

Thus this first set of direct dealings between Tibet and independent India was a dismal failure. Several months later, on 11 June 1948, the Tibetan government announced its acceptance of Nehru's India as the successor to British India,[44] but Indo-Tibetan relations had gotten off to a very bad start. India resented Tibet's claims to territory as well as its claim to millions of dollars in hard currency from previous exports.[45] For its part, Tibet resented India's unwillingness to assist it; the feeling grew that the new Indian government would not prove a reliable friend.

As the discussions with the Indians drew to a close, the Tibetan delegation visited the British and American officials in Delhi to obtain visas. Both governments had been scurrying to finalize a policy on

42. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 395; Mullik 1971: 53. B. N. Mullik was director of India's Intelligence Bureau from 1950 to 1965.

43. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 394–95.

44. H. E. Richardson, personal communication, 14 May 1984.

45. The Indian government, somewhat speciously, contended that Tibetan wool was unpacked in India (in Kalimpong), where it was then sorted by grade, weighed, and repacked. Consequently, they contended, the Tibetan argument that the wool was not exported to India but, rather, was simply sent through India to Calcutta for shipment to America was incorrect, and they were not required to provide foreign currency. The Tibetans countered that the intent all along was only to sell the wool to the United States, not to export it to India. B. N. Mullik, then the head of Indian Intelligence, later wrote of the Indian reaction to Tibet's position: this "ill-advised claim [to territory] made by the Tibetan Government . . . resulted in the temporary loss of a certain amount of Indian sympathy for Tibet" (Mullik 1971: 54); H. E. Richardson (personal communication, 14 May 1984) agreed.

whether the mission should be given official status and the Tibetan passports recognized. The initial British reaction was negative, as the following memorandum of a conversation between officials of the U.S. Embassy in London and the British Foreign Office reveals:

> Mr. Murray telephoned to Mr. Drumright today and said that, after giving the matter further thought, the Foreign Office had decided that the Tibetans now in New Delhi would not be received in the United Kingdom, at least for the time being, as an official trade mission. As a matter of fact, Mr. Murray went on, the Foreign Office had come to the conclusion that the journey of the Tibetans to the United Kingdom would serve no useful purpose. The Foreign Office really preferred that the Tibetans not visit the United Kingdom at all, but if they insisted, the U.K. would discourage their coming as an official mission and suggest that they come in a private capacity instead. Should the Tibetan authorities insist on the Tibetans visiting the United Kingdom as an official mission, the Foreign Office would, of course give the Tibetan desideratum further consideration.[46]

This exchange reflects the new British view of Anglo-Tibetan relations. No longer directly concerned with India, Britain now preferred to avoid messy entanglements in Sino-Tibetan politics and did not want to go out of its way to aid or encourage Tibet in its struggle to maintain its de facto independence. Since the Tibetan mission was going to visit China before Britain, a decision could be postponed; the high commissioner told the Tibetans to apply for visas in China. He did, however, give them transit visas to travel through Hong Kong to China.[47]

The United States faced the same set of difficult issues with respect to the Tibet mission and its status. On 1 August 1947, the U.S. ambassador in India informed the State Department that he had received letters from the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau and Shakabpa regarding a Tibetan trade mission that desired to visit the United States. The Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau's letter said:

46. USFR, 693.003 Tibet/1-1348, memorandum of conversation, dated 13 January 1948.

47. The transit visas said, "good for one direct journey in transit through Hong Kong enroute to the U.S.A."

The Tibetan Foreign Office to the American Chargé in India
Lhasa, 11 June 1947.

Sir: We are pleased to announce to you that for the welfare of the Tibetan people and merchants and establishing good relations between Tibet on the one hand and India, China, U.S.A., and England on the other, we are devising ways and means to promote the export and import trade between Tibet and the above countries. To achieve this end in view, we have deputed Tsepon Shakabpa who is the head of the Tibet Government Mint House as the leader of the trade mission to visit the above mentioned countries and have talks with the respective governments. We shall deem it highly obliged if Your Excellency will be kind enough to intimate this to the State Department at Washington also so that he may have cordial talks there on arrival. We empower Tsepon Shakabpa fully in this matter and solicit Your Excellency's help in every respect.

Your Excellency's faithfully, [seal][48]

The U.S. Embassy in India initially replied to the Tibetan government noncommittally but strongly recommended that the State Department grant the Tibetan request and "not throw away its unique opportunity to strengthen the friendly feelings which the Tibetans have exhibited."[49] This enthusiasm was not shared in Washington, and on 28 October the State Department notified the U.S. Embassy in Delhi that the proposed visit was permissible, but only under specific conditions that were very unfavorable to the Tibetans. The embassy was specifically instructed not to issue U.S. visas on the Tibetan passports and was also

48. USFR 693.0031 Tibet/8-147, enclosure in a letter from the U.S. ambassador in India to the secretary of state, dated 1 August 1947.

49. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-2147, dispatch no. 142 from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 21 August 1947, in U.S. Foreign Relations 1947, volume 7, pp. 598–600. The ambassador's analysis of the importance of Tibet in the context of U.S.-Soviet relations is worthy of note: "It has been pointed out in a number of earlier dispatches that Tibet's position as a vast island in Asia cannot safely be ignored, and it is an area which in the future might prove extremely useful for military operations. While the War Department's Plans and Operations Divisions may believe that under present conditions of warfare, the Tibetan plateau would not readily lend itself to development as a base if the necessity arose in the immediate future, it occurs to me that in the course of the next ten or fifteen years there might conceivably be developments in logistics which would render the Tibetan plateau extremely important for military operations at a time when China and India might be in a state of chaos."

informed that the trade mission could be received in the United States only on an informal basis.

> It should be recalled that China claims sovereignty over Tibet and that this Government has never questioned that claim; accordingly it would not be possible for this Government to accord members of the projected mission other than an informal reception unless the mission enjoyed the official sanction of the Chinese Government. If the members of the mission carry only Tibetan travel documents, any visas issued them should be placed upon Form-257 rather than upon their passports.[50]

The trade mission met with officers of the U.S. Embassy on 30 December 1947, presenting the acting head of the embassy with a photograph of the regent, together with letters from the regent and the Kashag. They explained the specific objectives of the mission's planned trip to the United States, but no political issues were raised at this meeting. The embassy officials indicated that the delegation would be admitted to the United States, but, like the British, they procrastinated, informing the Tibetans that since they were going to China they should apply for their U.S. visas there. Consequently, no discussion about the validity of Tibetan passports arose in India. When Shakabpa raised the issue of traveling to Japan,[51] he was again told to make inquiries in China.[52]

The Tibetans now turned their attention to visiting China. In a conversation held in China with U.S. Embassy officials, the Tibetan mission revealed the difficulties they had encountered in arranging the China trip: "They [the mission] pointed out that in Calcutta the British Government had issued visas on their Tibetan 'passports', as they called

50. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-2147, dispatch no. 46 from the secretary of state to the U.S. ambassador in India, dated 28 October 1947. Form 257 was commonly used to issue visitor's visas when the visitor presented a passport that the United States did not recognize.

51. Shakabpa wrote in a letter to the Americans that "we must avail of the opportunity of visiting Japan en route because we wish to have direct trade relations with Japan also. Before the war we got plenty of Japanese goods through India but we are not getting any now." (USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/2-2448, letter from Shakabpa to the attaché of the U.S. Embassy in Nanking, dated 20 February 1948.)

52. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/12-3047, enclosure (memorandum by the second secretary of the U.S. Embassy in India) in dispatch no. 459 from the chargé in India to the secretary of state, dated 30 December 1947, in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1947, volume 7, pp. 606–7.

them, for the Mission to enter Hong Kong but that the Chinese Government, refusing to recognize Tibetan passports, had insisted that the Mission use Chinese passports to enter China. The Mission, therefore, went to Hong Kong on one kind of document and to China on another."[53] In this manner, then, the Tibetans arrived in Nanking on 31 January 1948.

THE TRADE DELEGATION IN CHINA

While in China, the trade mission met with various Chinese leaders, including Chiang Kai-shek, and visited Chinese cities such as Shanghai, Peking, and Hongchow. The Chinese viewed the mission with apprehension: they feared that the Tibetans would use their visit to the West to erode the Chinese position that Tibet was a part of China. The Chinese foreign minister expressed this concern to the U.S. Embassy: "Obvious[ly, the] intention of Mission to act as independently as possible and by any means available to acquire recognition of its separation from China will create serious political embarrassment for National Government and will cause grave difficulties between [the Chinese] Foreign Office and Legislative Yuan."[54]

The Chinese had two basic goals with regard to the Tibetan mission: first, either to dissuade them from visiting America and England, or, if this was not possible, to entice them into using Chinese passports; and, second, to induce them, as they had the Tibetan Victory Congratulations mission of 1946, to attend the upcoming National

53. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/5-1148, memorandum of conversation between Shakabpa, an unnamed mission member, Mr. J. E. McKenna (first secretary) and E. Anderberg (attaché), in the U.S. Embassy in Nanking, dated 11 May 1948. The British ambassador in Nanking, Ralph Stevenson, confirmed that the Tibetans were compelled to use Chinese passports to enter China in a letter to the British Foreign Office in London describing a May 1948 conversation with the Tibetans. He reported that they obtained Chinese passports from the Chinese Consulate in Calcutta for their journey from India to China. (FO371/70042, letter from the British ambassador, Nanking, to the Foreign Office, London, dated 19 May 1948.) Shakabpa (interview) says that while they had to travel to China on Chinese papers, he was told by the Chinese that these were special "invitation" papers, not passports.

54. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-2648, telegram no. 1362 from the U.S. ambassador in China to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 26 July 1948.

Assembly meeting that was being convened to elect a president and vice-president.

Shui Hri-yin, the head of China's Mongolian and Tibet Commission Office, and Shen Tsung-lien, the former head of the Chinese Mission in Lhasa, tried repeatedly to persuade the Tibetans not to travel to America and other Western countries, and when these efforts met with failure, offered them 50,000 U.S. dollars, to help defray their traveling expenses, if they would use Chinese passports.[55] Shakabpa has written that he thanked the Chinese politely but declined their offers, telling them that his own government had issued passports and provided funds;[56] the reality, however, was much more complicated.

Soon after arriving in China, the trade mission sought visas for the United States and the United Kingdom. As the reports of American diplomats in China quoted below note, the Tibetans indicated clearly their strong feelings about independence and their desire to use their own passports:

> The displeasure of the Tibetans at any suggestion of Chinese or Indian sovereignty over their territory was quite evident in the discussions which they held with Embassy officers. The Tibetans seemed to resent both the physical, geographical and economic domination of Tibet by India and the attempted political domination of the area by China.[57]

> After further details, Mr. McKenna asked just what the current problem of the Mission is. They affirmed that their problem now is whether to travel to the United States on Tibetan passports or on Chinese passports. They then displayed the Tibetan passports which they had brought with them and on which the British visa [to Hong Kong] had been stamped. It was suggested to the Tibetans that not only would they

55. The British ambassador in Nanking informed the Foreign Office in London that, after a discussion with the Tibetan Mission, "it appears that the Chinese Government have undertaken, if the Mission will travel to the United States of America and the United Kingdom on Chinese passports (which they obtained from the Chinese consulate in Calcutta for their journey from India to China), to furnish them with all the foreign exchange they require for their own use during these visits, but that the Chinese Government are not willing to allow them to proceed anywhere except on Chinese passports." (FO371/70042, letter from the British ambassador in Nanking to the Foreign Office in London, dated 19 May 1948.)

56. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 396–97.

57. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/2-2448, memorandum of conversation between the Tibetan mission and the U.S. ambassador, dated 24 February 1948.

> have to obtain permission from the United States to enter American territory, but that a separate and distinct problem was obtaining exit visas from the Chinese Government. It was pointed out that they should decide what documents they wished to use for travel to the United States and that when they presented these documents to the Embassy action would be taken in the Embassy.
>
> It was quite apparent that the Tibetans wanted the Embassy to support their claim that the Tibetan passport was the one which the Chinese should recognize in issuing their exit visas. They asked, in fact, if it wouldn't be possible to get United States visas on both kinds of documents. At this point Mr. Anderberg explained in detail the clear difference between the issuance of an exit visa, which is entirely and exclusively a matter for decision and action of the Chinese Government, and the issuance of a visa to enter American territory, which is entirely a matter for decision by the American Government.[58]

The U.S. Embassy would not issue visas until the Tibetans had obtained exit visas from China. However, the Chinese would not issue these on the Tibetan passports and the Tibetans did not want to travel to the United States on Chinese passports.[59] To overcome this rather difficult situation, they decided to travel to the United States via Hong Kong. That would enable them to leave China and enter Hong Kong with the Chinese passports they had received in Calcutta, and then to discard these passports and travel to the United States on their own passports, which they believed could be used to get U.S. visas in Hong Kong.[60]

However, since the Tibetans did not want to risk encountering trouble obtaining their exit visas from China, they decided to appear to let the Chinese talk them out of visiting the United States.[61] George

58. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/5-1148, memorandum of a conversation concerning the Tibetan trade mission between Mr. Shakabpa, a translator, an unnamed Tibetan official, Mr. J. E. McKenna (first secretary) and Mr. E. Anderberg (attaché) of the U.S. Embassy in Nanking, dated 11 May 1948.

59. Ibid.

60. FO371/70042, letter from the British Embassy, Nanking, to the Foreign Office, dated 19 May 1948.

61. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-2648, memorandum of conversation between George Yeh and J. F. Melby (second secretary of the U.S. Embassy, Nanking), dated 26 July 1948. Shakabpa (interview) confirms this plan.

Yeh, the Chinese vice-minister of foreign affairs, explained to the United States how the trade mission had deceived the Chinese:

> It arrived in Nanking with the avowed purpose of concluding some trade arrangements with China. Over the protest of the Foreign Office the Generalissimo personally directed that $3,000,000.00 worth of silk and $750,000.00 worth of tea be made available for shipment to Tibet. In return therefore the mission agreed not to proceed to the United States. Upon its arrival in Hong Kong, however, the mission sold the silk to an Indian firm and it is unknown what happened to the tea. It then took the first available plane to the United States after addressing a letter to the Generalissimo expressing the great appreciation of Tibet for all the merchandise which had been made available.[62]

The Tibetans were still somewhat apprehensive that the United States might refuse to issue them visas from Hong Kong, so they hedged their bets by securing British visas in China so that they could travel directly to England from Hong Kong if their U.S. visa plans fell through. The British wrote of this: "They visited the British Ambassador in Nanking and explained their plan to him, requesting that he issue them British visas in China. The Ambassador not only agreed to the visas, but also to their being placed on the Tibetan passports. All of this was kept strictly confidential since the Tibetans informed the British that they were deceiving the Chinese, telling them that they were returning to India from Hong Kong."[63]

In the meantime, the Chinese National Assembly had been convened in Nanking to elect a president and vice-president of China, and the Tibetan trade delegation was urged by the Mongolian and Tibet Commission Office to participate. Having learned from the Tibetan experi-

62. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-1448, telegram no. 1248 from the U.S. ambassador in China to the State Department, dated 14 July 1948. The ambassador here describes the Chinese anger at finding out that the Tibetans had gone to the United States after having been "dissuaded" in Nanking. Shakabpa (interview) says that they never received any tea but did purchase the silk on the open market after receiving Chiang Kai-shek's permission. This silk, however, was not sold to an Indian firm; rather, the Indian firm was merely hired to ship the goods back to Tibet.

63. FO371/70042, letter from the British ambassador, Nanking, to the Foreign Office, London, dated 19 May 1948. The British issued two visas on the fourteenth, one good for transit through all British territories en route to Britain, and the other good for entry into the United Kingdom.

ence in 1946, Shakabpa and the others categorically refused to attend even as observers, telling the Chinese that the delegation was on a trade mission and had no orders to attend the assembly. The mission, did, however, on instructions from Lhasa, offer congratulations to Chiang Kai-shek on his election.[64]

The trade mission ultimately obtained their exit permits on the Chinese travel documents they had been issued in Calcutta, and then traveled to Hong Kong. There they disposed of these documents and obtained U.S. visas on their Tibetan passports.[65] While this accomplished their immediate ends, it was a costly maneuver politically, in that it revealed an incongruity between their behavior with the Chinese and their assertions to the West that Tibet was independent. A U.S. State Department analysis of the Tibetan issue noted: "Tibet, according to the leader of the Tibetan Trade Mission, is completely independent and the Chinese Government has no control whatsoever over the internal or external affairs of the country. However, the Tibetan Trade Mission entered China on Chinese passports and in general avoided raising open conflicts with the Chinese authorities."[66]

The trade mission arrived in Honolulu on 4 July and continued on to San Francisco on 9 July. In the meantime the Chinese realized that they had been duped and were incensed. China's inability to exercise political control over Tibet since 1912 had made the maintenance of an international facade of continuing control critically important to them,

64. Shakabpa 1967: 397. Li (1960: 191) misleadingly implies that the Tibetan delegates at this assembly were those of the Tibetan government: "mention might as well be made here of the participation of the Tibetan delegates in the National Assembly convened to elect the President and Vice President of China according to the new constitution, and of the fact that there were Tibetan members in the Legislative Yuan and the Control Yuan even on the eve of the evacuation of the Nationalist Government from Nanking in 1948." Although many ethnic Tibetans from areas under Chinese political control such as Ba, Litang, Triu, Jyekundo, Amdo, and Po had come to Nanking to attend the election meeting, none from (or representing) political Tibet attended. That is to say, neither the members of the Tibetan trade mission nor the Nanking-based officials of the Tibetan Bureau Office attended.

65. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/5-2948, dispatch no. 223 from the U.S. ambassador in China to the secretary of state, dated 29 May 1948, in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1948, volume 7, p. 759.

66. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/1-849, memorandum from R. Bacon (Far Eastern Department) to P. D. Sprouse (chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs) dated 12 April 1949.

and any international recognition for Tibet's de facto independence was considered a serious threat. Consequently, China launched a full-scale diplomatic counterattack.

On 12 July, George Yeh protested to the U.S. Embassy in Nanking concerning the trade mission's action. He emphasized four points:

> 1. The Tibetan authorities have no authority to deal with other nations as an independent country.
> 2. The Tibetan Trade Mission is in possession of Tibetan travel documents rather than Chinese passports, which they should bear. The Chairman of the Mission, Shakabpa, has no authority to negotiate directly with the United States Government.
> 3. The United States Consul at Hong Kong in issuing visas to the Mission did not notify the Chinese Special Commissioner at Hong Kong.
> 4. The United States has always recognized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet and the Chinese Government is amazed at the acceptance by the American Consul General at Hong Kong of Tibetan travel documents. The Chinese Government wishes to know whether the American Consul General at Hong Kong issued the visas on his own initiative or whether he was authorized to do so by the United States Government. If he was authorized by the United States Government to issue these visas, the Chinese Government would wish to be informed whether the United States Government has changed its "usual attitude toward Tibet."[67]

On the same day, Mr. T. L. Tsui, the counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., informed the State Department that the Chinese government wanted the United States to deal with the mission as a part of China and not as representing an independent state.[68] Three days later, Mr. W. Koo, the Chinese ambassador, handed an aide-mémoire on this to Secretary of State Marshall containing the following points:

67. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-1248, memorandum of telephone conversation by the chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs, U.S. State Department, dated 12 July 1948, in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1948, volume 7, pp. 759–60. This is a report of a telephone conversation with T. L. Tsui, counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C.

68. Ibid.

1. Tibet is a part of the Territory of the Republic of China and, under the Constitution of the Republic, has no authority to conduct diplomatic negotiations with foreign governments; and its relations with the outside world are subject to the direction and approval of the Central Government of China.

2. The travel papers which the members of the Tibetan Trade mission, headed by Mr. Shakabpa, hold, cannot replace the necessary passports issued by the Chinese Government for travel abroad. It is a matter of surprise that the United States' Consul-General in Hongkong visaed these unusual travel papers without first notifying or consulting the Chinese Commissioner of Foreign Affairs representing the Waichiaopu Chinese Foreign Office in Hongkong. Presumably he acted without first reporting to his Government for instructions.

3. Mr. Shakabpa and other members of the said Mission have no authority to enter into direct relations with the United States Government, but the Chinese Embassy will be glad to facilitate the purpose of their visit which is understood to be in the interest of trade.

4. The Government of the United States has always recognized the sovereignty of the Chinese Republic over its territory. The Chinese Government therefore believes that the action of the Consul-General in visaing the travel papers of the Tibetan Trade Mission in place of the regular Chinese Government's passports was an inadvertence and was not intended to signify any departure on the part of the United States Government from its traditional policy respecting the territorial integrity of the Republic of China.[69]

The U.S. State Department immediately backed off. The United States had no new policy regarding Tibet, and the State Department saw no reason to alienate the Chinese and precipitate a major diplomatic incident by ignoring Chinese wishes and treating the Tibetans as a mission from an independent nation. The State Department had, as we have seen, in fact already decided to treat the Tibetans in an unofficial manner, with the Department of Commerce acting as their hosts rather than the State Department. On the other hand, since Tibet was obviously functioning as an independent country and had been coop-

69. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-1548, aide-mémoire from the Chinese ambassador to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 15 July 1948, in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1948, volume 7, pp. 761–62.

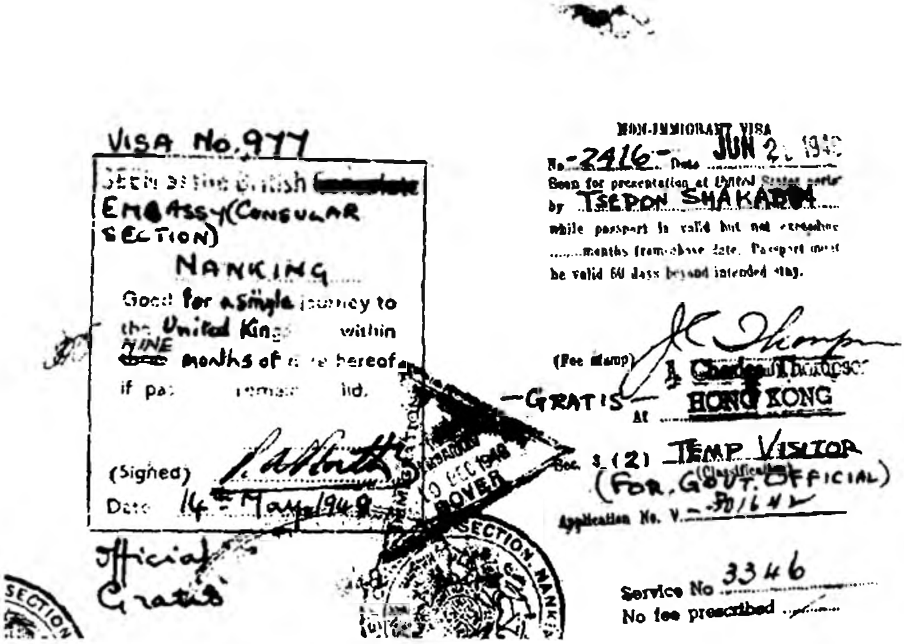
erative with the Americans with regard to downed fliers and the OSS mission of I. Tolstoy and B. Dolan, the State Department did not want to rebuff them.[70]

The State Department therefore misinformed the Chinese ambassador that the consul-general in Hong Kong had, under State Department instructions, not visaed Tibetan travel documents but had placed the visa on separate forms. Marshall also informed the U.S. Embassy in China that they might indicate to the Chinese vice-minister that the procedure of "placing visas on visa application form one frequently [is] employed in cases where valid passports [are] not presented by visa applicants or where passports presented have been issued by [a] country not recognized by the U.S."[71] However, as the photo of Shakabpa's passport indicates (see Figure 60), the U.S. visa was in fact placed on the Tibetan passport. It appears that the consul-general in Hong Kong had either not been aware of the earlier set of instructions or had simply misunderstood them. In any case, by this action the United States did notify the Chinese that they would not accept Tibetan passports as valid in the future, although they would not compel Tibetans to use Chinese passports.

At the same time (14 July), the Chinese also protested to the British in London, requesting that Britain withhold visas for the Tibetans entering British territory until the Tibetans had produced Chinese passports. The British also immediately capitulated and "admit[ted] a technical error" on the part of the British Embassy in Nanking in issuing visas on the Tibetan passport, although they also indicated that "in cases of disputed authority like this it is never our practice to stop a worthy individual from traveling or to take sides by insisting on the production of a national passport." The Foreign Office, like the Americans, went on to inform the ambassador in China that "correct procedure in the circumstances would of course have been to require the applicants to obtain affidavits of identity on which a British visa would be affixed, and we should be grateful if you would note this for future

70. FO371/70044, telegram from the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., to the Foreign Office, dated 5 November 1948. The telegram relates a State Department explanation of their treatment of the Tibetan mission while in the United States.

71. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-1548, telegram from the secretary of state to the U.S. Embassy in China, dated 22 July 1948.



60.

Shakabpa's passport (photo courtesy of Tsepön Shakabpa)

reference."[72] The British, therefore, despite almost four decades of close friendship with Tibet, decided not to honor the right of Tibet to issue and use its own Tibetan passport.

Unbeknownst to the Tibetans, therefore, the Chinese had been able to control the damage done by the mission's successful use of Tibetan passports. In retrospect, it seems as though the Tibetans had been extremely fortunate in obtaining visas on them at all.

The Chinese were still anxious about how the Tibetans would be treated in England and the United States. Encouraged by their initial diplomatic successes, the Chinese exerted further pressure on the United States and Britain, urging them not to make any gesture that could be seen as according the Tibetan mission the type of treatment normally accorded an independent state. They insisted that Tibetans

72. FO371/70042, telegram no. 573 from the Foreign Office to the British Embassy in Nanking, dated 19 July 1948.

should only attend functions and meet government officials in the company of officials from the Chinese Embassy, who were, of course, eager to "assist" the Tibetans.

On 19 July, the Chinese ambassador requested that the U.S. State Department ascertain whether the Department of Commerce "would be good enough to have Chinese Embassy representatives present in the event that any 'arrangements' were made with the Mission." The response of the State Department is interesting because it does not challenge the right of the Chinese to do this but, rather, argues simply that "it would consider the Tibetan Trade Mission as businessmen on a purely commercial basis," thus avoiding the issue.[73]

This strategy was soon challenged; the Tibetan mission declared that they wanted to meet with President Truman to present autographed photographs and letters from the Dalai Lama and the regent.

THE TRUMAN INCIDENT

At the State Department's request, T. L. Tsui, counsellor of the Chinese Embassy, came to discuss this issue on 22 July. He was told that the State Department "did not, of course, wish to facilitate arrangements for an appointment with the President without the prior knowledge and acquiescence of the Chinese Embassy. On the other hand, . [the U.S.] did not wish to refuse the [Tibetan] request without thorough consideration, as the Tibetans had been extremely courteous and helpful to American Army officers traveling in Tibet during the war and as such an appointment would undoubtedly contribute to the success of their Mission." Tsui responded that China had no problem with the idea of the Tibetans having a meeting with President Truman and, in fact, would like to facilitate such an appointment. However, they had some "procedural" problems, which could be resolved "if the request for an appointment were made by the [Chinese] Embassy on behalf of the Mission rather than by the Mission directly." They also suggested that perhaps Ambassador Koo should accompany the mission if an in-

73. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-1648, memorandum of conversation of P. D. Sprouse (chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs) with T. L. Tsui (Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C.), dated 19 July 1948. In US Foreign Relations 1948, volume 7, pp. 763–64.

terview was arranged. Tsui further told Fulton Freeman that the Chinese ambassador was entertaining members of the Tibetan mission at dinner that evening and that this was an ideal opportunity for him to "broach the subject to the Mission in a discreet fashion."[74] Freeman undoubtedly realized that the Tibetans would not agree to this formal recognition of their subordination to China, since Shakabpa had called the State Department just the day before and had opened his remarks by saying, "Why is Tibet handled by the Division of Chinese Affairs?" and then, without waiting for a reply, had stated that Tibet was not under China but was an independent country.[75] Freeman therefore suggested that the Chinese explain their wishes to the Tibetans in such a way that it would seem as if the Chinese would be assisting the Tibetans rather than claiming something mandatory of them. He also told Tsui that he did not see any reason for Ambassador Koo to accompany the mission so long as the request had come from the Chinese Embassy, but that it was really a matter to be decided between the ambassador and the Tibetans.[76]

The next morning, Tsui reported to Freeman that Ambassador Koo had referred the matter back to Nanking. Tsui asked that the State Department withhold action for a day or two until Nanking's views were received. In Nanking, George Yeh, the vice-minister of foreign affairs, told the U.S. Embassy that Shakabpa had indicated to the Chinese ambassador in Washington that he wished to discuss general economic and political matters with President Truman and that because of this the Chinese foreign minister was asking the embassy to transmit an official request that the Tibetan trade mission not be received by the president and that any future dealings with them be channeled through the Chinese Embassy in Washington. This request was supported by three points: (1) The mission was not authorized by the Chinese govern-

74. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-2248, memorandum of conversation of Assistant Chief F. Freeman (Division of Chinese Affairs) with Tsui (counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C.), dated 22 July 1948. In Foreign Relations 1948, volume 7, pp. 764–65.

75. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-2148, memorandum from P. D. Sprouse (chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs) to W. W. Butterworth (director for Far Eastern Affairs), dated 21 July 1948.

76. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-2248, memorandum of conversation with the counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., by F. Freeman, dated 22 July 1948. In US Foreign Relations 1948, volume 7, pp. 764–65.

ment; (2) The mission was traveling on documents not recognized by the Chinese government; and (3) The activities of the mission suggested their general unreliability and their obvious intention of securing by any means available as much recognition as possible of the special status of Tibet.[77] While Shakabpa does not appear actually to have intimated to the Chinese that he wished to discuss political issues with the president, the way the Tibetan mission left China and their subsequent independent behavior in Hong Kong and the United States had made the Chinese suspicious of what they might try to do in a private meeting with President Truman.[78]

All of this put the State Department in a difficult position. They did not want to offend the Chinese, but they also did not want to rebuff the Tibetans by denying them a meeting with President Truman. The U.S. plan to have the Chinese request such a meeting had seemed a perfect resolution, but the negative response by the Chinese Foreign Office had forestalled that. The State Department, however, was not yet willing to yield on the issue, and they exerted pressure on the Chinese to be more flexible. In a meeting with the Chinese minister Tan Shao-hwa on 28 July, the State Department emphasized that although the United States had "no intention of acting in a manner to call into question China's *de jure* sovereignty over Tibet," the Chinese should also "appreciate that the fact that it exerts no *de facto* authority over Tibet is [the] root cause of [the] situation."[79] The State Department also emphasized that they had to reciprocate the gracious reception that the U.S. emissaries had received in Tibet, and that, due to widespread press interest in the Tibetan mission, Chinese intransigence might act to its own detriment if "it should become known that their intended call on President was frustrated by" the Chinese government. They also said that "such a story might also be raised in light of self-determination which is [a] popular concept among [the] American people." The State Department then

77. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-2348, memorandum of conversation of Assistant Chief F. Freeman (Division of Chinese Affairs) with T. L. Tsui (counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C.), dated 23 July 1948.

78. Shakabpa (interview) says that the issue of Chinese help in meeting Truman was discussed at the dinner and that he told the Chinese clearly that he did not need any help.

79. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-2648, memorandum of conversation of J. F. Melby, second secretary, U.S. Embassy in China, with George Yeh, vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, dated 26 July 1948.

asked "whether Chinese ingenuity could suggest [a] solution" and again intimated that they preferred the procedure whereby the Chinese Embassy would simply request that the State Department arrange such a reception.[80] The Chinese minister said that he would press Nanking for a favorable reply and suggested that the State Department initiate parallel action with Nanking, which they did.[81]

On 31 July, the Chinese Embassy informed the State Department that China agreed to settle the problem along the following lines: (1) "The Chinese Ambassador would address a letter to Mr. Woodward, Chief of Protocol, asking that an appointment be made for Ambassador Koo to present the members of the Tibetan Trade Mission to the President; (2) It would be expected that Ambassador Koo would himself, if approval were given, inform the Mission of the arrangements and that he would accompany them to call upon the President." The Chinese requested that any written responses that might be made by the U.S. president to the Tibetans be sent to the Chinese ambassador or to the American Embassy in Nanking, for transmission to the Tibetans through the Chinese government. Should the Tibetans refuse this plan, the Chinese asked that the United States not grant them an appointment with the president.[82]

Two days later, on 2 August, Freeman called on Shakabpa and nonchalantly mentioned that Ambassador Koo wanted to introduce the mission to the president. He also asked Shakabpa when he planned to leave Washington for New York City so that he could arrange the appointment before then. The Tibetans refused to fall into this trap and responded that it was not necessary for the Chinese ambassador to accompany them. Freeman's account of this meeting reveals the Tibetans' position:

> I [Freeman] informed Mr. Shakabpa that the [State] Department was conscious of the feelings of the Tibetans with regard to this matter, but pointed out some of the reasons why it would probably not be feasible

80. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-2648, telegram no. 1086 from the secretary of state to the U.S. Embassy in Nanking, dated 28 July 1948.

81. Ibid.

82. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/7-3148, memorandum of conversation of P. D. Sprouse (chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs) with Tan Shao-hwa (minister of the Chinese Embassy in Washington), dated 31 July 1948.

> to arrange the call under any other circumstances. I stated that, despite the large degree of autonomy that existed in Tibet, the U.S. Government had traditionally recognized and continued to recognize the *de jure* sovereignty of China, with whom we maintained the most cordial relations. The Chinese Ambassador, I continued, was the recognized diplomatic representative of their country and it was therefore in accordance with customary procedure for him to accompany the Mission in its formal call on the Chief of State. Mr. Shakabpa referred in his reply to the treatment which had been accorded Dolon and Tolstoy on their trip to Tibet in 1943 and stated that the Chinese authorities were not consulted when they called on the Dalai Lama and presented letters from President Roosevelt. He said that when the Mission visited India and Hong Kong they were received by the highest officials in those places without requiring the presence of Chinese diplomatic or consular officials, and he saw no reason why they should establish an "unfortunate precedent" in the United States. He again requested that the Department arrange an "informal visit" with the President and thus avoid the necessity of bringing in the Chinese Embassy.[83]

To Shakabpa's argument, Freeman responded that all appointments with the president were treated with almost the same formality and given equal prominence in the press and that the exclusion of the Chinese ambassador would be a needless cause of embarrassment to the Chinese government. He concluded that "the Department would regret exceedingly to have the Mission depart from the United States without having seen the President" but that "to arrange an appointment in any other way [than with Koo] would be very difficult if not impossible."[84]

After a long conversation in Tibetan between Shakabpa and Surkhang, Shakabpa said that they had to consult with their two colleagues not present, but that they were not optimistic about being able to agree to this. At this point Freeman suggested that after the mission had seen the president in the company of Ambassador Koo, it might be possible

83. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-248, memorandum of conversation of F. Freeman (Assistant Chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs) with Shakabpa and Surkhang, dated 2 August 1948.
84. Ibid.

to arrange a private meeting with Secretary of State George Marshall without the Chinese ambassador. Shakabpa then asked whether such a private meeting could be arranged as a substitute for the president's meeting. Freeman replied that he thought that such a meeting would be feasible only if the Tibetans had already met with the president so that this constituted their second meeting with a high U.S. official. Shakabpa intimated that under these conditions they might be willing to visit President Truman with Ambassador Koo and said they would discuss the matter among themselves and would give Freeman their final reply the next day.[85] That reply was negative. The Tibetans rejected the Chinese formula and again urged the State Department to dispense with the presence of the Chinese ambassador, but they now added that if this was not possible, they would like a visit with the secretary of state to be arranged.[86]

At the same time, on 4 August, Marshall sent the U.S. ambassador in China a telegram instructing him to exert pressure on the Chinese Foreign Office by informing them that their suggested arrangement appeared "somewhat disingenuous since CHI AMB already knew from discussion this subject with [the Tibetan] Mission that Tibetans' acquiescence to CHI AMBs participation probably impossible to obtain. It would further appear Chinese thus expected place blame for failure arrange Presidential appointment for Mission on Tibetans themselves and thus avoid press criticism that projected visit frustrated by CHIGOVT." Marshall went on to state that the State Department did not feel bound to have the Chinese ambassador present when the Tibetans called on the president and once again urged that the Chinese agree to the original solution of having the Chinese merely request such a visit: "Accordingly pls endeavor to obtain FONOFF concurrence indicating in this connection that in press announcement of visit emphasis would be

85. Ibid. Shakabpa (interview) denies he ever intimated that they might agree.

86. No record of this exchange exists, but it is obvious from events that this is what transpired. The secretary of state, in fact, on 4 August telegraphed to the U.S. Embassy in China that "it is expected the SECY will receive Mission members for informal visit on August 6." (USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-248, telegram no. 1127 from the secretary of state to the U.S. ambassador, Nanking, dated 4 August 1948.) The telegram also says that the Tibetans indicated they would prefer to return to Tibet without seeing President Truman rather than be accompanied by the Chinese ambassador.

made on the fact that appointment with PRES was arranged basis of request received from CHI EMB."[87]

The State Department then switched course again and agreed to arrange a private, though "informal," visit for the trade mission with the secretary of state without soliciting the reaction of the Chinese Embassy. The Tibetans, not knowing of Marshall's pending attempt to pressure Nanking, agreed to meet the secretary of state and gave their letters and photographs for President Truman to the State Department for transmission.

The Chinese fears about the political content of the letters the Tibetans had brought for President Truman and Secretary of State Marshall were ill-founded. They turned out to be perfectly innocuous. For example, the letter from the Dalai Lama to President Truman read as follows:

> To
> Mr. Truman,
> The President of the United States of America.
>
> I am glad that you are enjoying the best of health and doing good service to uplift the happiness and prosperity of the whole world. Here, I am well and doing my best for the religion of Lord Buddha and welfare of all beings. Tsepon Shakabpa, the Financial Secretary of the Tibetan Government and his assistent Khenchung Changkhimpa are being sent to America to observe trade conditions and to purchase gold and silver for importation to Tibet. Kindly extend your most appreciated assistance to them in purchasing and exporting gold and silver from America. With greeting scarf, a portrait of myself bearing my seal and a silk embroidered Thangka.
>
> From,
> Dalai Lama.
> Dated 25th of 8th month Fire-Pig
> Tibetan Year.[88]

87. Ibid.

88. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-648, official English-language copy of the letter from the Dalai Lama to President Truman, dated the twenty-fifth of the eighth month of the Fire-Pig year [1947].

The letters from Taktra and the Kashag indicated interest only in trade and in purchasing gold. The most political of the letters addressed to Marshall and Truman included a request to "kindly recognize them as our trade mission and [give] necessary help in their discussion on trade matters and in purchasing gold and silver, considering the good relation between America and Tibet."[89]

The "informal" meeting of the Tibetan trade mission with Secretary of State Marshall took place on 6 August and mainly concerned the Tibetan mission's wish to purchase 50,000 ounces of gold for their government.[90] The State Department arranged a small reception for the mission but did this in what they arbitrarily defined as an informal idiom, since the hosts were members of the State Department's Office of International Trade Policy rather than the Political Division.[91]

Two days later, on 8 August, Secretary of State Marshall received a telegram from Ambassador L. M. Stuart in Nanking bearing the news that the Chinese Foreign Office refused to agree to the U.S. proposal regarding the Tibetans' visit to President Truman.[92] Although the United States had threatened to act without Chinese approval, they now let the matter drop, since the Tibetans, under the impression that there was no hope of such a meeting, had already left for New York City.

After the mission's meeting with Marshall, Shakabpa immediately sent him a letter clarifying the background of the hard-currency issue and requesting U.S. assistance in two spheres: first, putting diplomatic pressure on the Indian government to allow Tibet to obtain foreign currency for the sale of Tibetan exports, and, second, issuing a permit allowing the trade mission to buy 50,000 ounces of gold bullion (roughly 2,000,000 U.S. dollars) and then to export it to Tibet.[93] Sha-

89. Ibid., copy of letter from the cabinet ministers of Tibet to President Truman.

90. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-648, memorandum of conversation of Secretary of State G. Marshall with the Tibetan trade mission, dated 6 August 1948; USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-748, letter from Shakabpa to Secretary of State G. Marshall, dated 7 August 1948.

91. FO371/70044, telegram from the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., to the Foreign Office, London, dated 5 November 1948.

92. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-848, telegram no. 1458 from Ambassador L. M. Stuart in Nanking to the secretary of state, dated 8 August 1948.

93. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-748, letter from Shakabpa to the secretary of state, dated 7 August 1948.

kabpa had determined by this time that he could buy gold from Mexico at a lower price than from the United States, but for political reasons he was intent on buying U.S. gold.[94]

The State Department had similar thoughts, for several weeks discussing internally the political implications of a U.S. sale of gold to Tibet. As the following note to the secretary of the treasury indicates, they decided it would not imply recognition:

> The State Department would perceive no objection to sale of gold to the Government of Tibet and does not believe that such sale would in any way constitute an impairment of United States recognition of China's *de jure* sovereignty over Tibet, since the Department does not intend that such a sale would affect the continuation of this Government's recognition of China's *de jure* sovereignty over Tibet.[95]

On 27 August the State Department told Shakabpa that although they could not interfere in Indian-Tibetan trade dealings, the Treasury Department was willing to sell Tibet the gold it wanted and Shakapba should apply directly to them.[96]

While the Tibetans welcomed this news, it also brought up the embarrassing fact that Tibet had no dollars with which to purchase the gold. When the secretary of state had asked them about this during their meeting, Shakabpa had been rather vague, since he knew full well that India had not agreed to release the necessary hard currency. With permission to purchase the gold now in hand, Shakabpa, Pandatsang, and the interpreter returned to Washington on 30 August to seek a U.S. loan. They met H. Merrell Benninghoff, deputy director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, the next day.[97] Shakabpa explained the situa-

94. S. Cutting, an American who visited Tibet during Reting's regency, had told Shakabpa that it was extremely unlikely that the United States would ever sell them gold from the treasury, for doing so would imply U.S. recognition of Tibet. Shakabpa therefore felt that securing U.S. agreement would be tantamount to recognition of Tibet's independent status. (Shakabpa, interview.)

95. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-748, letter from the secretary of state to the secretary of the treasury, dated 27 August 1948.

96. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-748, letter from J. Burke Knapp, director of the State Department Office of Financial and Development Policy, to Shakabpa, dated 27 August 1948.

97. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-3148, memorandum of telephone conversation of F. Freeman (Chinese Affairs) with Shakabpa, dated 30 August 1948.

tion clearly in a letter he presented to Benninghoff at the end of their meeting:

> And regarding the Dollar exchange with which to pay for the gold, we received a telegram from the Government of Tibet. In the telegram we are informed that it seems the Government of India is going in the long run to release U.S. Dollars for Tibet.
>
> But because the talks going on between the Government of India and the Government of Tibet regarding the continuation or otherwise of the old treaty between Tibet and British India have not concluded, it may be that it will take some more time before the U.S. Dollar is actually released for us by the Government of India.
>
> Therefore, we are now instructed by the Government of Tibet to request to the Government of the United States for a temporary loan of two million dollars with which to buy the gold and some machineries in the United States for export to Tibet.
>
> This loan, of course, will be repaid, as soon as we get the Dollar release from the Government of India. But in case for any reason unforeseen she will not release the necessary Dollars for Tibet, we intend to repay the Dollar loan from the proceeds of export to the United States of our products of Tibet such as wool, furs, musk, yak tails, etc. . . .
>
> The Government of Tibet has instructed us to apply for this temporary loan because she thinks that this will give her ample time and opportunity to withstand the pressure of the Government of India on Tibet to re-settle the old treaty according to the original terms which are rather disadvantageous to Tibet in as much as they place difficulties in her way towards commercial and other relations with other countries.[98]

The State Department refused to go along with this proposition; they felt that making such a loan to Tibet would be an act of political recognition much larger than the mere sale of gold. On 27 September, therefore, they informed Shakabpa that the United States had no funds available at that time to permit such a loan.[99] With this avenue closed,

98. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-3148, letter from Shakabpa to the secretary of state, dated 31 August 1948.

99. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/9-2748, memorandum of E. W. Doherty of the State Department's Finance and Development Office on the Tibet loan request, dated 20 September 1948; USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/8-3148, letter from the secretary of state to Shakabpa, dated 27 September 1948, in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1948, volume 7, p. 785.

the Tibetan trade mission was unable to purchase the gold, and so prepared to leave by sea for Paris and then London.[100]

THE TRADE MISSION'S VISIT TO ENGLAND

The problems the mission encountered in the United States were not limited to their dealings with the Americans. Perhaps the greatest shock came when they tried to renew their expired British visas.

From the beginning, Britain had been troubled by the trade mission's plan to visit Britain. It foresaw conflict with China over this visit and no benefits to itself. And although Tibet would obviously profit from the international visibility and status, this was no longer of great concern to Britain's Foreign Office, who told their consulate-general in New York that the crux of the matter was that "we are anxious to avoid unnecessary trouble of this kind [namely, the Chinese protesting Britain's issuing of visas to the Tibetans] with the Chinese Embassy while the Tibetans are in this country."[101] The British Foreign Office initially decided that the best course was to treat the mission simply as "distinguished visitors" rather than as an official mission.

The Tibetans had not been informed that their British visa was the result of a "technical error," so they had no qualms about staying in the United States beyond the three-month validity of their initial visa. After arranging to sail for Europe and Britain in early October, they requested new visas from the British Passport Control Office in New York City. They were totally unprepared for the reception they received. As Shakabpa put it in a letter of protest he sent to the British ambassador in Washington, "We were told by the officer concerned that our passports will not be stamped with the regular visa stamps of the British Visa office owing to a special instruction received by him from authorities concerned in London. Instead we were advised to sign 'Affidavits in lieu of Passports' which he told us would be visaed." Shakabpa conveyed his ire clearly, informing the ambassador that "we are not in a

100. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/11-548, letter from Shakabpa to the secretary of state, dated 5 November 1948, in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1948, volume 7, p. 786.
101. FO371/70043, letter from the Southeast Asia Department of the Foreign Office to the British consulate-general in New York City, dated 12 October 1948.

position to travel under 'Affadavits in lieu of Passports' when we have with us regular Tibetan Government Passports."[102] The British ambassador insisted that the Tibetans would have to use the forms for passportless persons:

> In visa matters, as you may know, we are bound to follow procedures laid down in the standing instructions and in a case such as this the normal method is for the visa to be affixed on an affidavit of identity. This does not affect in any degree the facilities for travel, and in fact a visa given in this way is just the same as a visa affixed to any other travel document. I trust that you will send your representative to the British Passport Officer in New York again, so that your Mission can be furnished with the papers necessary under our regulations. I am sure that the Passport Officer will assist you in every way that is proper.
>
> May I take this opportunity of wishing you an enjoyable and profitable stay in England.[103]

The Tibetans responded by canceling their ship tickets for 22 October and informing the British consulate-general in New York that, rather than accept their visas on "affidavits," they preferred not to visit England.[104] At the same time they sent the following appeal to the British foreign minister:

> To,
> His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs
> His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom
> London, England (Europe).
>
> Your Excellency,
>
> I take this privilege of addressing Your Excellency regarding our trip to England. We have been deputed officially by the Cabinet (Kashag) of Tibet to visit India, China, the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries and find out the possibilities of improving trade relations between Tibet and the above countries.
>
> We have already visited India, China and the United States. And we

102. FO371/70044, letter from Shakabpa to the British ambassador in the United States, dated 9 October 1948.

103. FO371/70044, letter from the British Embassy in the United States to Shakabpa, dated 15 October 1948.

104. FO371/70044, telegram from the British Embassy in Washington to the Foreign Office (London), dated 20 October 1948.

would have very much liked to visit England also especially as relations between England and Tibet have been very cordial for a long time. Besides, we have some letters to be presented personally to His Majesty the King of England, the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commerce Department addressed by Their Holinesses the Dalai Lama and the Regent of Tibet and the Kashag (Cabinet) of Tibet.

But we were surprised by the requirement of your Visa Officer in New York. He informed us that he could issue visa for us to go to England only in Forms of Affidavits to be signed by us, as he had been especially instructed by authorities in London to do so. He declined to issue visa on our Passports especially issued to us by the Government of Tibet.

We wrote to him to inquire to authorities in London again explaining our position and to issue visa on our Passports, as we are unable to travel by Forms of Affidavits while we, as official members of official trade mission from Tibet, have our passports issued by the Government of Tibet.

In this connection, we wrote also to the British Consulate General in New York and to His Excellency the British Ambassador at Washington, D.C. but without success. We enclose copies of our correspondence for Your Excellency's information.

We beg to inform Your Excellency that if the British Visa Officer refuses to issue visa on our passports, we must regretfully decline to go to England at all, and we are returning to India via France. We are sailing to France by Queen Elizabeth on November 6, 1948.

I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's most faithfully,
Tsepon Shakabpa, Leader,
Tibet Trade Mission[105]

The Tibetans' anger and their threat not to visit England led the British ambassador in Washington to ask the Foreign Office whether under the circumstances it might not be possible to instruct the passport office in New York City to make an exception for the Tibetans, or

105. FO371/70044, letter from Shakabpa to the British minister of foreign affairs, dated 28 October 1948.

whether it might not even be possible simply to make arrangements to admit them to Britain without visas.[106]

R. C. Blackham of the Foreign Office concurred:

> It would be politically most unfortunate if the "Mission" go back to Tibet in a disgruntled frame of mind, believing that we have raised unnecessary difficulties about admitting them to the U.K. Such a development might possibly jeopardise our chances of getting Tibetans to receive a British Mission at Lhasa in 1949 if it is decided to send one. In the circumstances, I think it would be unfortunate if these people did not come to the U.K.[107]

The British then devised an ingenious solution whereby they could allow the Tibetans to use their passport, yet not renege on their promise to the Chinese not to issue *new* visas on Tibetan passports. They instructed their passport office in New York "to alter the 'three month limit' endorsement on the [mission's present] visas so as to extend their validity [to nine months] without affixing new visas"—in other words, to cross out "three months" and write above it "nine months." The passport office was instructed to make the alteration "as inconspicuously as possible, adding only an initial to justify the alteration [and] not to insert anything to show that this alteration was affected in New York." On 28 October, these instructions were wired to the British Embassy in Washington and were carried out (see Figure 60).[108]

With this settled, the issue of how Britain would treat the Tibetans while they were in Britain was considered. On 28 October, the Chinese Embassy requested that the Foreign Office arrange all meetings of the Tibetans with British officials through the Chinese Embassy. The British responded that this was unnecessary because the mission was "informal and confined to matters of trade and commerce."[109] However, on

106. Ibid.

107. FO371/70044, minute by R. C. Blackham (Foreign Office), dated 21 October 1948.

108. FO371/70044, instructions included in a telegram from the Foreign Office to the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., dated 28 October 1948. Figure 60 shows Shakabpa's passport with the altered visa of nine months neatly handwritten above the original three-month endorsement.

109. FO371/70044, report on meeting of the British Foreign Office with an officer of the Chinese Embassy in England, dated 28 October 1948.

5 November Shakabpa sent the British foreign minister a letter requesting audiences with the king and queen, the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the head of the Commerce Department, so that the mission could present letters sent by the Dalai Lama, the regent, and the Kashag.[110] The situation was further complicated when the Commonwealth Relations Office discovered that, contrary to the Foreign Office's consistent (and convenient) assertion that they had received no formal communication from the Tibetan government about the official status of the trade mission, a letter from the Tibetan Kashag had in fact been given to the British Office of the High Commissioner in India and from there transmitted to the Foreign Office on 9 January 1948. Consequently, the Commonwealth Relations Office recommended that the "Trade Mission is entitled to be given the facilities normally given in the case of official Trade Missions."[111] The argument of the Commonwealth Relations Office is interesting and illustrates just how wide a range of views there were regarding Tibet's status and Britain's responsibilities toward it:

> I think you will be fully aware that the Chinese claim to control Tibet's external relations is no new thing. Both we and the Government of India have, for over 30 years, insisted on maintaining direct diplomatic relations with the Tibetan Government, and so far as we can recall, have on no occasion admitted the frequently expressed claim of the Chinese Government that they are responsible for the conduct of Tibet's external relations. The 1914 Convention, which governs the relations between India, ourselves, and probably Pakistan, on the one hand, and Tibet on the other was negotiated in the name of the King, on behalf of the United Kingdom as well as India. As we regard Tibet as capable of entering into Treaties, it is difficult to see why we should at the present juncture be chary of receiving a Tibetan Trade Mission in this country or of recognising Tibetan passports. Nor would we be in favor of admitting the claim of the Chinese Embassy that our official contacts with the Mission should be through them. It is hardly the moment for the Chinese to press

110. FO371/70044, letter from Shakabpa to the British foreign minister, dated 5 November 1948.

111. FO371/70044, letter from Sir Paul Patrick (Commonwealth Relations Office) to the British Foreign Office, dated 16 November 1948.

their claims when the present instability of the Nanking Government so belies them.[112]

At the same time, Sir Basil Gould, the retired political officer in Sikkim, who feared that the Foreign Office would leave the Tibetans to fend for themselves while in England, wrote to Sir Gilbert Laithwaithe of the Commonwealth Relations Office explaining the significance of the mission and urging Britain to respond appropriately:

> This is the first time that an official Tibetan Mission has been sent to the western world; the trade Mission probably represents as near an approximation to a diplomatic mission as the Tibetan Government feel they can risk without provoking China unduly; such coming into the open on their own account is altogether in accordance with the policy of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India during recent years.[113]

All of this, plus the Foreign Office's interest in sending a British mission to Tibet in 1949, led the Foreign Office to decide that it was preferable to risk offending the Chinese somewhat than to rebuff the Tibetans. The Foreign Office therefore issued orders that the Tibetan mission should be received as an official trade delegation and said the Foreign Office would do everything it could "short of treating the Tibetans as an official political Delegation" to see that their visit was a success.[114] A member of the South East Asia Department of the Foreign Office met the mission at Victoria Station, and an officer from the Conference Department of the Foreign Office was assigned to look after them in London. Mr. C. Mayhew of the Foreign Office met with them on behalf of Foreign Minister E. Bevin, who was on leave at the time; the lord chamberlain gave them an audience on behalf of the king, who was ill and had stopped seeing all visitors; and they also visited the prime minister.[115] The Chinese ambassador asked the British Foreign

112. Ibid.

113. FO371/70044, letter from B. Gould to G. Laithwaithe (Commonwealth Relations Office), dated 15 November 1948.

114. FO371/70044, minute by Sir O. Sargent (Foreign Office) on the Tibetan trade mission, dated November 1948.

115. The Tibetans suspected, erroneously, that their visit with the lord chamberlain was a ploy on the part of the Foreign Office to prevent them from seeing the king.

Office whether a member of the Chinese Embassy could accompany the Tibetans to their interview with the Prime Minister, but the Tibetans adamantly refused the escort, and they got their way.[116]

The British were careful, however, not to offer the Tibetans any overt support for their claim that they were *independent* of China and decided to refuse to discuss political questions with the mission, should they broach them. The Board of Trade, rather than the Foreign Office, was designated as their host in London, and as the following letter reveals, the Tibetans' meeting with the foreign minister was clearly delimited as informal: "We would therefore hope that the visit to the Prime Minister should be regarded as unofficial, in which case we would, if the Chinese complain, say it was natural for the Prime Minister to receive distinguished visitors and that his action had no significance as regards the status of the Mission."[117] The British also tried to minimize publicity, asking the lord chamberlain, for example, to keep the Tibetans' visit to the palace out of the *Official Gazette* and the *Court Circular.*[118]

Economically, the British refused to make pounds sterling available to the mission, and the Treasury and the Board of Trade advised the Tibetans, as the Americans had done, that the best hope they had for regular access to foreign currency was through some agreement with India, although it was suggested that setting up an agent and a bank account in Britain might be an alternative.[119] They did, however, agree to inform the Indian government of their discussions with the Tibetans and to ask that India give them a sympathetic hearing with regard to the hard-currency issue.[120] On 10 December, after three weeks in London, the trade mission returned to India.

It is not easy to assess the success of this first official government mission from Tibet to the West. In both the United States and Britain

116. FO371/70044, minute by R. C. Blackham (Foreign Office) on the Tibetan trade mission, dated 3 December 1948.

117. FO371/70044, letter from P. F. Grey (Foreign Office) to the Office of the Prime Minister, dated 24 November 1948.

118. FO371/70044, letter from W. B. Ledwidge to the Office of the Lord Chamberlain, dated 29 November 1948.

119. FO371/76318, letter from the Treasury Department to Shakabpa, dated 9 December 1948.

120. FO371/76318, telegram no. 130 from the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 11 January 1949.

the mission achieved some of Tibet's aims but not others. The Tibetans had withstood Chinese pressures and maintained an independence of action, including traveling to the United States and the United Kingdom on their own passports and meeting with the U.S. secretary of state and the British prime minister. They knew, however, that their passports had not really been accepted by the British, and they had been prevented from seeing the U.S. president. The outcome in economic terms was also mixed. The United States agreed to sell Tibet 2,000,000 dollars' worth of gold to back their currency, but neither the United States nor Britain would provide a loan for the Tibetans to buy this gold. The visits, then, did not in any way resolve the ambiguous status of Tibet. The Tibetans were treated courteously, but neither of the two Western countries offered them any new political support. They both acknowledged by their treatment that Tibet possessed some degree of international identity independent of China, but they refused to treat Tibet as a fully independent polity. This was a particularly unpleasant awakening to the limits of support to be expected from Britain, which had long been seen as Tibet's closest friend and supporter.

After they returned to India, in January 1949, the trade mission reopened talks with the Indian government regarding the hard-currency issue, asserting their wishes on the following three points so strongly that the Indian diplomats described them as "demands" in their conversations with the Americans: (1) the release of 2,000,000 dollars for the purchase of gold; (2) retention of foreign exchange earned by exports of Tibetan wool to other countries; and (3) grant of free customs facilities on imports into Tibet through India.[121]

The Indian government was still opposed to giving the Tibetans the hard currency they wanted in order to purchase gold, although by this time Tibet had accepted India as Britain's successor government. V. M. M. Nair, the deputy secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, the office in charge of these negotiations with the Tibetans, informed the U.S. Embassy in January that it was extremely unlikely that India

121. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/3-2349, letter from the U.S. Embassy in India to the secretary of state, dated 23 March 1949. Reports on conversation with V. M. M. Nair, an official in the Ministry of External Affairs who was primarily responsible for the conduct of negotiations with the Tibetans.

would give the Tibetans anything more than a fraction of the amount they were asking. He explained the Indian position:

> The Government of India did not consider the import of gold as an "essential" import, particularly in these times when currencies of so few countries were completely backed by gold. Another fact which causes the Government of India not to look with approval upon the Tibetan request is the evidence in their possession that fairly large amounts of silver and lesser amounts of gold are being smuggled from Tibet into India.[122]

This concern about what would happen to the gold after it got to Tibet and with how "essential" it was to Tibet illustrates the rather patronizing attitude the newly independent Indian government held toward Tibet.

In March, the Indian government compromised somewhat, agreeing to provide the Tibetans with 250,000 dollars in currency to purchase machinery and other essential items from the United States, but not gold. The Tibetan trade mission had little interest in the compromise and continued to insist on funds to purchase gold, returning to Kalimpong while the Indian Ministry of External Affairs reconsidered their request.[123] Toward the end of April, India agreed to allow Tibet to use the 250,000 dollars released for machinery to purchase American gold bullion.[124] All other Indo-Tibetan trade issues dealing with foreign currency were left for further negotiations.

122. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/1-849, memorandum of conversation of U.S. Embassy officials with V. M. M. Nair, dated 6 January 1949.

123. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/3-2349, letter from the U.S. Embassy in India to the secretary of state, dated 23 March 1949. Shakabpa (interview) said that until our discussion he had not known that the Tibetan government had ever officially accepted the new Indian government as Britain's successor.

124. USFR, 693.0031, Tibet/5-3149, telegram no. 614 from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 31 May 1949. This related to Washington the Indian government's notification that they had released the $250,000. The Tibetan trade mission actually bought $425,800 worth of gold. This was shipped by air to their agents in Calcutta, the Hong Kong–Shanghai Banking Corporation, and from there was carried by pack animals to Tibet. (USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/5-349, telegram from the State Department to the U.S. Embassy in India, dated 5 May 1949; letter from L. Y. Pangdatshank [*sic:* Pandatsang] of the Tibetan trade mission to the New York Federal Reserve Bank, dated 27 April 1949. Since India released only $250,000, the source of the other $175,800 in U.S. dollars is unclear. Both the Indian government and the U.S. State Department commented that they had no idea where the money had come from. Shakabpa (interview) said that the Trapchi mint gave Tibetan traders large sums of Tibetan

AMERICA REEXAMINES ITS POLICY ON TIBET

Unbeknownst to the Tibetans, the visit of the 1948 trade mission prompted a discussion within the U.S. State Department regarding U.S. policy on Tibet. In early January 1949, the U.S. ambassador in India suggested to the State Department that in view of the existing conditions in Asia, a review of U.S. policy toward Tibet was appropriate. In particular, the embassy proposed that if the Communists succeeded in taking control of China, the United States should be prepared to treat Tibet as independent.

The Far East Department of the State Department conducted a review in which five arguments were brought forward in support of the embassy's proposal:

> 1. If the Communists gain control of China proper, Tibet will be one of the few remaining non-Communist bastions in Continental Asia. Outer Mongolia is already detached. Communist influence is strong in Burma and Communists are infiltrating into Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia. Tibet will accordingly assume both ideological and strategic importance.
>
> 2. If Tibet possesses the stamina to withstand Communist infiltration—and the embassy in New Delhi seems to feel that it does—it would be to our interest to treat Tibet as independent rather than to continue to regard it as a part of a China which has gone Communist.
>
> 3. The Government is relatively stable. The people are conservative and religious by nature and disposed to oppose Communism as in conflict with the tenets of Buddhism. The Dalai Lama's authority extends beyond Tibet over persons who practice the lamaist form of Buddhism in Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Mongolia, etc.
>
> 4. The Chinese Government cannot now assert—and there currently appears little likelihood that it ever again will be able to assert—effective *de facto* authority in Tibet.
>
> 5. The Tibetans are showing increasing interest in establishing trade

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currency to buy wool and they in turn repaid this in rupees in India. He said these were converted into U.S. currency by the Hong Kong–Shanghai Bank and were the source of the extra $175,800. It is certain, however, that at least a part of this gold was purchased with the private funds of trade mission members for their own use.

> and other relations with the outside world. It is to our interest to see that these efforts are oriented to the West and not to the East.

The report also gave a number of cogent arguments against the embassy's proposal:

> 1. A decision to recognize Tibet involves a reconsideration not merely of our policy toward Tibet but also of our policy toward China. A basic principle of our policy toward China has been respect for China's territorial integrity. This principle has retarded while not entirely preventing the gradual dismemberment of China and it helped China emerge from World War II with the status of a great power. This policy should not be abandoned unless it is clear that a permanent breakup of China is inevitable and that we have a substantial stake in Tibet.
>
> 2. Adoption of such a policy would lessen the weight of our objection to current Soviet efforts to detach additional northern areas from China. It would also complicate our position that we are not sufficiently sure of the Mongolian People's Republic's independence to favor the MPR's admission to the UN.
>
> 3. Such a policy might lead to intensified efforts on the part of the USSR to take Tibet into the Communist camp. If we carry on toward Tibet much as at present, the Communists might also be content to let the present situation there ride. By recognizing Tibet as independent while we are not in a position to give Tibet the necessary practical support, because of its remoteness, we may in fact be pointing the way for Communist absorption of the area.
>
> 4. As a practical matter Tibet's importance both ideologically and strategically is very limited. Because of its geographical remoteness, the primitive character of its Government and society and the limited character of its contacts with the outside world, Tibet's orientation toward the West cannot be counted upon to endure on an ideological basis unless supported by far-reaching practical measures. If we cannot take these practical measures, recognition i itself would not hold Tibet in an alignment with the West and might in fact work against our long-run interests. Similarly, efforts to utilize Tibet strategically as for example an air base or for the discharge of rockets would encounter not merely formidable difficulties of terrain and weather but also Tibet's objections on religious grounds to the passage of planes over its territory. Unless rare minerals are found in Tibet, the Army does not regard Tibet as of strategic significance.
>
> 5. The answer to what measures of a practical nature can be taken

> appears to lie largely with India which now controls Tibet's access to the West. If India cooperates with the West the importance of Tibet both ideologically and strategically will be considerably less. If India does not cooperate with the West the difficulties in the way of utilizing Tibet as a bastion for the West would be enormously magnified.[125]

The State Department's conclusions were not unfavorable to Tibet. Under the then current set of conditions, that is to say, with the continued existence of Nationalist China, it concluded:

> 1. . . . It is believed to be clearly to our advantage under any circumstances to have Tibet as a friend if possible. We should accordingly maintain a friendly attitude toward Tibet in ways short of giving China cause for offense. We should encourage so far as feasible Tibet's orientation toward the West rather than toward the East.
>
> 2. For the present we should avoid giving the impression of any alteration in our position toward Chinese authority over Tibet such as for example steps which would clearly indicate that we regard Tibet as independent, etc. We should however keep our policy as flexible as possible by avoiding references to China's sovereignty or suzerainty unless references are clearly called for and by informing China of our proposed moves in connection with Tibet, rather than asking China's consent for them.[126]

If China should fall to the Communists, however, the memorandum suggested, it would be better to treat Tibet as independent than as a part of a Communist Chinese state. How far the United States should go in supporting Tibet—for example, by formally sponsoring it in the United Nations—was held to depend on the likely Soviet response and, more important, whether the United States would have the practical means to see that Tibet would continue in the Western alignment.[127]

While the U.S. Department of State decided to wait and see what transpired in China, by early 1949 it was clear in Tibet that the end of

125. USFR, 693.0031 Tibet/1-849, memorandum on U.S. policy toward Tibet sent by the Far Eastern Affairs Department of the State Department to the Chinese Affairs Division of the State Department, dated 12 April 1949.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid.

the Chinese civil war was in sight and that the victor would be the Communists, led by Mao Tse-tung. This realization led the Tibetan government, as the next chapter will discuss, to intensify their military preparations and to take a number of actions including, for the first time since the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, an open diplomatic attack against the Chinese.

17

TIBET AFTER THE FALL OF THE KUOMINTANG

After the surrender of the Japanese in 1945, the Chinese Communists made it clear that they would not accept a one-party postwar Nationalist government, and China slipped into a bloody civil war. By this time many Tibetan government officials owned shortwave radios and a few received foreign newspapers. They were therefore able to follow the end of the war and its aftermath in some detail, in particular the Chinese civil war. Although Tibetans initially discounted the Chinese Communists as a military and political force, events in China gradually forced a reassessment of this opinion.[1]

Despite the massive U.S. armaments they controlled, the civil war did not go well for Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang. The Communists gradually expanded the territory under their control: by July 1947 they had seized most of the formerly Japanese-held territory in Manchuria, and by November 1947 they had launched an offensive that pushed the Nationalist forces entirely out of that area. For the first time, battles occurred south of the Yangtse River in the Chinese heartland itself. The news reaching Lhasa listed one Communist victory after another; Kaifeng, the capital of Honan, fell in June 1947; in November 1948, Muk-

1. It is instructive to examine briefly the sizes of the Sino-Tibetan military establishments at this time. In 1945, the Chinese Communists claimed to have 915,000 regular army troops and a militia of 2,200,000, while Chiang's forces were estimated by the United States at 3,000,000 combat troops (Clubb 1978: 254); Tibet had roughly 13,000 poorly equipped and trained troops, and its entire population was probably little more than one million.

den fell; and soon after that, in January 1949, the Nationalists suffered a lethal defeat at the battle of Hwai-Hai in central China. Peking was occupied on 31 January 1949, and Nanking fell in late April, followed by defeats in Taiyuan, Wuhan, Sian, Nanchang, and Shanghai in May 1949.[2] By the spring of 1949, the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek were obviously about to lose control of China.

News of these Communist victories produced great pessimism and anxiety in Tibet, because the godless Communists were considered to be a much greater threat to the Tibetan way of life than the Kuomintang was. The 13th Dalai Lama had warned about the Red menace, and Mongolian monks in Lhasa described the destruction of religion in their country after the Communists rose to power. As city after city fell to the Chinese Communists, the Tibetan government became convinced that the Communists would eventually take control of China. One Tibetan aristocratic official recalled the attitude in Lhasa in 1949 and early 1950:

> We have dealt with the Kuomintang for a long time and have seen that, whatever they may say [about Tibet being a part of China], they could not put their ideas into practice. For example, they could not even send soldiers to accompany the Panchen Rimpoche. They say they will do this and that but they never could do much. . . . On the other hand, we know that the Communists are very strong, for every day we hear that such and such is lost. . These people really meant business.[3]

Apprehension concerning the prospect of a confrontation with the Communists turned the atmosphere in Lhasa to one of gloom and defeat. Many people began to make plans to flee.

> People started thinking of moving to India and started shifting their valuables either to India or to the monasteries. It was in that period that even the monasteries started buying Indian rupees and putting them aside. In my family I remember that I packed a bag full of Indian rupees and left it in front of my table so that if something happened suddenly I could take that bag and run. . . People were like birds, ready to fly. .

2. Ibid.: 273–88.
3. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

> In April [1949] the Kuomintang started running toward Formosa and from that time onward the situation became hopeless.[4]

As events unfolded in China, the Tibetan government took a number of steps aimed at improving its position in a showdown with China after the civil war.

THE EXPULSION OF ALL CHINESE FROM TIBET

One step the Tibetan government took was to close the Chinese Mission and expel all Chinese officials from Tibet. This idea appears to have originated with Ngabö, who feared that if the Nationalist government fell, the new Communist government might first accredit the existing Nationalist officials in Tibet and then gradually substitute Communist officers. Ngabö's plan won approval from the shapes and Taktra, who saw it as a means of gaining some breathing space before having to establish a new relationship with the dreaded Communists.[5]

Lhasa at this time contained many spies and agents from competing offices of the Nationalist government and from the Chinese Communists. Most of these were in Lhasa in the guise of either traders or monks, the Three Seats being open to Chinese and Mongolians and, of course, to Tibetans from areas under Chinese political control. The Tibetan government decided to take this opportunity to deport all Chinese and Tibetans suspected of being spies. The Kashag assigned Namseling, a tsipön, to put together a comprehensive list of all suspected persons.[6] He worked on this for several months, during which time the utmost secrecy was maintained by the shapes and the trungtsi, who had all taken oaths of secrecy before the Kashag's very sacred turquoise

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. Anon1 (interview) says that this idea originated with H. E. Richardson and Li (1960: 199) implies that he was involved, but Richardson (interview) said that the action came as a complete surprise to him. The British Indian Office and Foreign Office records confirm this: the British complained that they were placed in a difficult situation since they had no warning that these Chinese were going to arrive in India. However, it is not improbable that Richardson might have commented during private, casual conversations that the Communists might claim the Kuomintang office as their own *if* they came to power, and this could have influenced the Tibetans.
6. Anon1, interview.

Buddha. Other officials realized from the many special meetings that something unusual was going on, but no hint crept out as to what was transpiring.[7]

On 8 July 1949, the Kashag summoned Chen, the acting head of the Chinese Mission, and informed him that they suspected that his staff included Communist agents and that they were expelling all Kuomintang officials, including those working in the wireless office, the schools, and the hospital: all had to leave Lhasa for India within two weeks. Tibetan army troops removed the Chinese Mission's wireless antenna so that no news of this could be sent to China. The Chinese officials were allowed to take their property with them and were given transportation and a military escort to India.[8] The Tibetan government had kept the secret so well that the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi only found out about the expulsion on 21 July, after all the officials had left Lhasa.[9] Another 300 to 400 individuals, mostly Chinese, who had been identified by Namseling as spies were photographed and expelled at the same time as the officials.[10]

For the Tibetan government this was a dramatic and radical step that returned Sino-Tibetan relations to the status of the 1913–1934 period, when China had no officials stationed in Tibet. From Lhasa's point of view this move came none too soon, for on 1 October 1949, the Chinese Communist government—the People's Republic of China—was formally inaugurated in Peking, ushering in a new era.

THE FALL OF KAPSHÖBA

Early on the same day that the expulsion orders were issued and the Chinese wireless office sealed, a young boy went to the Ondu Shinga area in Lhasa and started shouting that the Chinese were shooting guns and that war had started. This rumor passed quickly from person to person, creating instant panic; street hawkers in the marketplace packed

7. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
8. Anon1, interview.
9. Li 1960: 198.
10. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. Namseling is said to have obtained the names by bribing several of the Chinese agents.

their goods and fled, shopkeepers closed their stores. When the news of the disturbance reached the Lhasa magistrate's office in the Barkor Market area, they immediately made inquiries and arrested the boy, who, it was discovered, was Kapshöba's cook's errand-boy. To the official's surprise, the boy said that he was acting under instructions from Kapshöba's cook.[11]

When the report of the incident arrived at the Kashag, Kapshöba passed it off as a joke. The other shapes said nothing and it appeared that the matter was closed. However, the report also went to the regent's office, where it was taken more seriously. That same night, the regent talked about the incident with Ramba Shape and, separately, with Surkhang Shape. With their concurrence, the regent decided that Kapshöba should be suspended pending an investigation of the incident.[12] One Kashag staff member recalled how Kapshöba was informed:

> [The day following the report] I went to the office at 9 A.M., the normal time for junior staff members, who were expected to arrive about an hour before the shapes. However, I found the Kashag was already in session, although Kapshöba was absent. I wondered what was going on. At 10 A.M., the normal time for shapes to arrive, Kapshöba came in as usual and took his seat. There was nothing different in his manner.
>
> Q. Do you think he really didn't know anything at all?
>
> A. Of course he knew as soon as he came in, because the two other shapes were already in session and the trungtsi were sitting there. After about five minutes one *shöndrön* [aide-de-camp to the regent] came and informed Kapshöba that the regent wanted to see him in the room where the regent gave public audiences. Kapshöba went immediately, but by then there could have been no doubt [that he was going to be demoted or dismissed]. At this point his face showed his disappointment.
>
> When he arrived at the regent's room, Thubten Lengmön, the chief aide-de-camp, read the charges to him. Later, Kesang Ngawang, an aide-de-camp, told me that Thubten Lengmön had told the aides-de-camp that "this Kapshöba was a sly man, so if he tried to put his hands into his pocket [to get a gun], hit him on the hand with a stick. You must all be alert and stay near him when I read the charges." The charges alleged

11. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 101.
12. Ibid.

that someone from Kapshöba House had spread a rumor that war was coming and caused a commotion that disturbed the public peace. The aide-de-camp further said, "The fact that such an act of irresponsibility and disturbance should have emanated from a shape, and that it should have been done in Lhasa's largest marketplace, is a very serious charge. There are also other charges which need to be investigated and until these charges are examined, you should not attend the Kashag and should remain only in [the custody of the] Tseja Office." Kapshöba was permitted to wear his official dress since he was still technically a shape, but he could not leave or receive visitors.[13]

On the following day, the trungtsigye began an investigation of this incident. When the boy repeated that he had received instructions from Kapshöba's assistant cook, the cook was called in for interrogation. The cook denied the charge and the committee responded by beginning the type of interrogation known as "face-to-face whipping."[14] In this technique, the two suspects were placed face to face and then both whipped on their buttocks until one changed his story. In this case, the young boy soon said that it was really Kapshöba's horse-steward who had given him instructions. The horse-steward was then summoned and questioned by the face-to-face whipping method; again the young boy said that he was wrong and that the person who had given him the order was actually Kapshöba's aide-de-camp Tsewang. When Tsewang was summoned, he accepted responsibility for the youth and the youth's actions. He insisted that no one had ordered him to do this.[15]

In the meantime, Kapshöba had appealed for help to Tricang Rimpoche, the influential lama who was the junior tutor to the young Dalai Lama. Tricang Labrang then contacted their friend, the monk-shape Ramba, and asked him to help secure Kapshöba's release and reinstatement. Ramba apparently said he would do what he could and, when the interrogations proved no link to Kapshöba, told Tricang Labrang that the situation looked favorable for Kapshöba.

His hopeful assessment was premature. When the shapes informed the regent of the lack of evidence against Kapshöba, Taktra produced a

13. Anon1, interview.
14. In Tibetan: *tsha 'dri mgo sprod byed.*
15. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 102.

letter in Reting's handwriting that said Kapshöba had urged Reting to regain the regency and had volunteered to help him from Lhasa. After letting the shapes read the letter, Taktra told them, "This is the kind of person he [Kapshöba] is; you should decide what punishment he deserves."[16] Taktra had apparently been waiting since 1947 for an opportunity to destroy Kapshöba, and the bizarre incident in the Barkor provided him with the chance he needed. Ramba informed Tricang Labrang that nothing could now be done for Kapshöba.[17]

However, because Kapshöba was extremely verbal and knew so much of the internal affairs of state, the shapes feared that if they openly charged him with disloyalty he was likely to make embarrassing countercharges. Kapshöba had apparently let it be known that if he was charged, he had much to say. Also, they could not charge him with the Barkor disturbance without evidence. The shapes avoided the dilemma by not appointing an investigating committee and issuing an unusual verdict that simply said that because Kapshöba knew what his crimes were they did not have to be enumerated.[18] It went on to decree that Kapshöba would be exiled to Southern Tibet, where he would be imprisoned for life. The sentence specified that it could not be commuted for any reason and that he was not to be allowed to communicate with anyone by letter.[19]

16. Pandenla, interview. The contents of the letter were reported by Gyentsen Tempel (interview), a monk official from the pro-Taktra Gyambumgang household. Another incriminating letter written to Kapshöba by Reting from jail was mentioned by Khe smad ([Kheme] 1982: 103), who reported that Reting wrote to Kapshöba from prison, "Knots caused by the snake should be released by the snake itself," implying that Kapshöba was the cause of Reting's downfall and should now rectify that situation. Shar rtse ([Pebola] 1983: 121), as described earlier, also mentions a letter sent from prison, saying that it said: "You know all the circumstances regarding the conflict between Reting and Taktra. Please help me now to get released from prison. If I remain in prison, the fish and water both will become unhappy." This letter implied broadly that if Kapshöba did not help him, Reting would somehow implicate him.

17. Pandenla, interview.

18. Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Lhalu, interview; Kapshōba, interview. Gyentsen Tempel (interview) said the Tibetan was: *khyod ra'i byas nyes de blo gsal red.*

19. Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Lhalu, interview; Kapshöba, interview; Gyentsen Tempel, interview. Because of the escape of Kumbela and Canglocen to India in 1937, Taktra's manager ordered the District Commission of Southern Tibet (Lhochi) to instruct the Nedong district officials to make certain that Kapshöba did not escape and to beat him if he even acted troublesome. Anon1 reports that the Southern commissioner later told him of this conversation. In reality, although Kapshöba was under very close surveillance at first, with the Southern commissioner making occasional visits to Nedong,

The Lhasa street-song writers did not miss the opportunity to comment satirically on Kapshöba's behavior and the Kashag's incredible verdict:

> Kapshöba, with a head like a two-faced drum,
> [has a] wife with a flat face.
> By acting recklessly,
> the impossible has been made possible.[20]

The small two-sided drum known as a *damaru* has strikers which hit on both faces and therefore is used to symbolize someone who is two-faced. Kapshöba's wife did have a flat face; the second line serves merely to balance the "head" in the first line. The third line literally means behaving without taking note of the norms of society. In the fourth line, "the impossible" refers to a shape's being dismissed from the government service and imprisoned for life with no interrogation or hearing, and without clear charges even being made.

Initially, there had also been talk of sealing Kapshöba's house and confiscating his property, but this was rejected since it would indirectly have benefited Kapshöba, who had massive debts which would then have been rendered null and void. The Kashag instead decided that the worse punishment would be to make his family pay these obligations. Thus, the sentence specified that Kapshöba's sons were responsible for repaying all of their father's debts.

Another witty Lhasa street-song from 1939 reflects Kapshöba's enormous propensity for debt:

> Those who have, build with wealth.
> Those who don't have, build by their power.
> [But] Kapshöba is building
> a completely different "palace" on debts.[21]

The first two lines refer to the two houses then being built by two big Khamba trading families, Pandatsang and Sandutsang, and to the new

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later the restrictions were relaxed and Kapshöba was even able to bring women into his quarters (Anon1, interview).

20. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 104. In Tibetan: *ka shod da ru mgo la / lha lcam gtor ma'i dkar rgyan / mi byed dgu byed byas pa / mi srid srid pa byung song.*

21. In Tibetan: *yod pas rgyu yis brgyab gis / med pas dbang gis brgyab gis / ka shod bu lon pho brang / ma 'dra 'dra cig rgyag gis.*

house being constructed by the then regent, Reting Rimpoche. The last two lines poke fun at Kapshöba, who was building a large new house by borrowing money.

This episode reveals the continuing internal disunity among the political elite in Lhasa. As the Tibetan government made last-minute preparations to face the new challenge posed by the People's Republic of China, they had little internal solidarity or political consensus.

TIBET TAKES STEPS TO FACE THE CHINESE

In order to increase the efficiency of their administration, the Tibetan government assigned specific areas of responsibility to each shape and made each solely responsible for decisions in that sphere of action, pending approval only by the regent. Ramba, the monk-shape, was placed in charge of foreign affairs; Surkhang, in charge of military recruitment and expenses; and Ragashar, in charge of the army and defense.[22]

The government also tried to increase the strength of the military. In 1947, the Kashag had asked India for a large supply of arms including mortars, antiaircraft guns, and ammunition. The Tibetan government repeatedly pressed for the ammunition and even offered to pay for it in one lump sum. Although this was not initially given, the Indian government eventually sanctioned the sale of 144 Bren guns with 360,000 rounds of ammunition, 168 Sten guns with 204, 238 rounds of ammunition, 1,260 .303 rifles with 252,000 rounds of ammunition, and 42 Verey pistols with 630 rounds of ammunition. They did not sell Tibet the mortars or antiaircraft guns.[23] In June 1948, the Tibetan commanders-in-chief met with H. E. Richardson in Lhasa to discuss Tibet's continuing requirements for military equipment.[24]

The real push to improve the quality of the army came in 1949,

22. Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 92.

23. IOR, Mss.Eur.D.998/23, annual report of the British and Indian Mission in Lhasa for 1947. Payments were arranged in installments of 100,000 rupees per year.

24. FO371/70042, letter from the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 27 June 1948. That same year it was proposed that a new regiment of 1,000 troops be drafted from the unemployed males (including beggars), but this idea was ultimately rejected since there was considerable opposition to giving "riff-raff" weapons. (ibid.)

when a Communist victory in China was imminent. In February of that year, the Tibetan government asked India to sell them a large supply of weapons, including 1,500 Bren guns, 10,000,000 rounds of ammunition, and mortars.[25] The Tibetan government also asked India to send two military officers to Tibet to help train its troops,[26] and they indicated that they would ultimately like to raise another 20,000 recruits.[27] The Indian government responded in June 1949 by delivering the earlier approved weapons, agreeing to an additional 3.5 million rounds of ammunition, and allowing the Tibetans to send small numbers of troops for weapons training to Gyantse, where a small detachment of Indian troops was posted at the Indian Trade Agency. However, they postponed the decision on the other weapons Tibet wanted.[28]

In the fall of 1949, the Tibetan government invited the Indian government's new political officer in Sikkim, H. Dayal, to Lhasa. They also urgently requested still more weapons and ammunition from India: 20 two-inch mortars, 20 three-inch mortars, 10,000 two-inch mortar bombs, 10,000 three-inch mortar bombs, 2,000,000 rounds of .303 rifle ammunition, and 1,000,000 rounds of Sten gun ammunition. At the same time, a detachment of twelve Tibetan soldiers went to Gyantse to receive training in the use of Bren and Sten guns.[29]

In September 1949, the Tibetan government revived the idea of creating a "Better Family" (Trongdra) Regiment of young males conscripted from the better families and established a mobilization office to draw up plans for the general mobilization of large numbers of troops.[30] Moreover, troops and new weapons were shifted to Kham

25. FO371/76315, letter from the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 13 June 1949.

26. USFR, 793B.00/1-1050, report of a conversation with K. P. S. Menon, Indian foreign secretary, in a telegram from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 10 January 1950.

27. FO371/84454, report titled "Tibet" prepared by the Research Department of the British Foreign Office, dated 2 December 1949.

28. FO371/84465, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 5 January 1950. The telegram reports on a meeting with Indian officials regarding military aid to Tibet.

29. Ibid.; letter from the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 15 September 1949. H. E. Richardson (personal communication, 14 May 1984) says that an agreement was reached at this time.

30. FO371/84465, letter from the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 15 September 1949.

and Nagchuka (Northern Tibet) to strengthen border defenses, and extra training was given to the troops stationed there. In addition, all the younger lay and monk officials were trained in the use of Bren guns.[31]

The Kashag began negotiations with private companies to help develop Tibet. J. E. Reid of the General Electric Company in India spent seven weeks in Tibet at the invitation of the Tibetan government, to examine the feasibility of installing electric wiring in Lhasa. He signed a contract for his firm to supply a small hydroelectric station producing 500 kilowatts at Lhasa. Two Tibetans were appointed to go to Calcutta to be trained in the assembly and handling of the equipment. About forty-five tons of equipment for this project were to be flown to Lhasa by Bharat Airways, which was undertaking an air-route survey with the aim of establishing regular service between India and Tibet. Tibet had no airfields, but several very flat areas near Lhasa could quickly be converted into landing strips. Reid himself delivered to Bharat Airlines a letter of permission, signed by the regent, allowing them to undertake flying operations in Tibet.[32] Tibet was negotiating with the Indian government to obtain their agreement. India, however, had political doubts about the utility of air transport between India and Tibet; H. Dayal, the political officer in Sikkim, told the British he thought India would stall on the proposal for a long time.[33]

Tibet worked to develop its communications capacity. As was discussed earlier, the U.S. government provided three complete radio stations in early 1945, and the Tibetan government asked R. Fox, the British Mission's wireless operator, to train selected officials in their operation. When R. Ford relieved Fox in 1945, he continued this instruction. By 1947, the Tibetan government realized that it could no longer afford this slow process of developing self-reliance, particularly since the forced closing of the English school in Lhasa in 1945 meant few were qualified to be students. As an alternative they sought Indians

31. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 93; Ford 1958: 33–34.

32. FO371/84449, notes on a conversation with Reid by a member of United Kingdom high commissioner's staff, dated 19 January 1950.

33. FO371/84466, report of discussion with H. Dayal, in a letter from United Kingdom Office of the High Commissioner to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 1 April 1949.

to run the equipment. When this proved unsuccessful, they hired Ford, who began working in the summer of 1948. He spent the first year constructing Radio Lhasa, Tibet's first radio broadcasting station, and completed it just as the Chinese Communists were emerging victorious in China. For the first time, Tibet could broadcast to the outside world.[34]

Because of its size (about 1,200 miles long) and its exceedingly rough terrain, Tibet was in great need of a wireless network. To send messages from Lhasa to Chamdo in Kham (approximately 400 miles) took seven to ten days by even the fastest "pony express." Consequently, because Kham was the most likely site for a Sino-Tibetan confrontation, a second radio station was established by Ford in Chamdo, the district headquarters for the civil and military governor-general of Kham. Fox, the original British Mission wireless operator, who was living in India, was then hired to take over the Lhasa broadcast station.[35] A third radio station was set up at Nagchuka, the major administrative center and the seat of the governor of Northern Tibet. Nagchuka was the gateway to Lhasa from Tsinghai Province, the other likely Chinese invasion route.[36]

Some of the problems encountered in beginning the Kham station are worth considering, for it is all too easy to view the Tibet of 1949 from the perspective of the present. Ford recalled:

> First of all the engines sent by the Americans did not generate enough power to work the stations, because of the rarefied air. New engines were asked for, and this time it was suggested that they should be diesels. I was told that the diesels had arrived, and I arranged for the supply of diesel oil while I was in India, only to find petrol engines when I got to Lhasa.
>
> The engines had been dismantled and crated and carried by porters over the Himalayas, and when I put them together I found that some of the parts had gotten lost on the way. Only one engine was complete, and

34. Ford 1958: 18–19.
35. Ibid.: 36.
36. A further effort toward improvement occurred in May 1949, when the government attempted to restore discipline among the officials by prohibiting them from playing mah-jongg and ordering them to turn in all mah-jongg sets (Thar chen, May 1949 issue).

> that was used for the radio station in Lhasa. Spare parts for the others were ordered, and I took one incomplete engine to Chamdo. If I had relied on getting the spare parts I would not have been on the air yet. But fortunately I had bought two portable radio transmitters and receivers in India, and the engines originally sent by the Americans were powerful enough for these.[37]

These efforts came none too soon, for the inauguration of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949 brought China a powerful government for the first time in the twentieth century. The Chinese Communist party's ideology emphasized reunification of China, one of the prime targets of which was the liberation of Tibet and its reintegration with the "motherland." The Chinese Communists believed that Tibet's desire to be separate from China was caused by Western imperialist interference in Chinese affairs. The Chinese considered it not to be coincidental that the 13th Dalai Lama had expelled all Chinese from Tibet and severed relations with China in 1913 just after he had spent two years in India and developed a close friendship with the British diplomat Sir Charles Bell. The Chinese saw British policy as an attempt either to eliminate or to reduce to token status all Chinese influence in Tibet and saw the elimination of British "imperialism" (i.e., influence) as critical to the restoration of what they considered to be China's traditional hegemony over Tibet. Thus the Chinese repeatedly broadcast in both Chinese and Tibetan (the latter by the well-known *geshe* from Tsinghai Province, Sherab Gyatso) that the Chinese People's Liberation Army was going to liberate Tibet from the imperialists.

The Tibetan government responded to these broadcasts with their own broadcasts saying that since there were no imperialists in Tibet, Tibet did not need liberation; the relationship between Tibet and China was one of priest and patron, not one in which Tibet was a part of China.[38] On 2 November 1949 the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau sent a strangely naive letter to Mao Tse-tung asking for assurance that China would not attack Tibet and indicating that Tibet wanted to discuss the

37. Ford 1958: 36. With progressively increasing altitude the barometric pressure declines; that is to say, there are fewer molecules of oxygen per unit volume. This often causes problems in engines that have not been specially built or adjusted to compensate.
38. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 408.

return of ethnic Tibetan territories then held by China. Drafts of this letter had been shown to H. E. Richardson and then to H. Dayal when he visited Lhasa in September–November 1949, and both had tried but failed to convince the Tibetan government to express their views in a less inflammatory manner; they feared the letter might incite the Communists to take early action against Tibet. The Tibetans, however, wanted to make their position clear before the Chinese Communists' view became generally accepted.[39] The letter read:

> To,
> The Honourable Mr. Mautsetung,
> Chairman of the Chinese Communist Govt., Peiping.
>
> Tibet is a peculiar country where the Buddhist religion is widely flourishing and which is predestined to be ruled by the Living Buddha of Mercy or Chenresig [the Dalai Lama]. As such, Tibet has from the earliest times up to now, been an Independent Country whose Political administration had never been taken over by any Foreign Country; and Tibet also defended her own territories from Foreign invasions and always remained a religious nation.
>
> In view of the fact that Chinghai and Sinkiang, etc., are being situated on the borders of Tibet, we would like to have an assurance that no Chinese troops would cross the Tibetan frontier from the Sino-Tibetan border, or any such Military action. Therefore please issue strict orders to those Civil and Military Officers stationed on the Sino-Tibetan border in accordance with the above request, and kindly have an early reply so that we can be assured. As regards those Tibetan territories annexed as part of Chinese territories some years back, the Government of Tibet would desire to open negotiations after the settlement of the Chinese Civil War.[40]

The most significant step Tibet took to protect its position was its attempt to secure major support from the Western democracies.

39. FO371/76315, monthly report of the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the period ending 14 November 1949; and USFR, 7938.00/1-950, conversation of U.S. Ambassador Henderson with H. Dayal, dated 21 November 1949.

40. FO371/76317, copy of letter from the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau, Lhasa, to Mao Tse-tung, dated 2 November 1949.

TIBET APPEALS TO THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN

Because relations with the new Indian government had been strained since 1947, the Tibetan government believed they could not rely solely on India for aid and support. They decided, therefore, to send the United States and Britain copies (in Tibetan and English) of the letter sent to Mao Tse-tung, together with a request for civil and military aid. The letter to E. Bevin, dated 4 November 1949, said:

> The Chinese Communist troops have invaded the Chinese Provinces of Lanchow, Chinghai and Sinkiang; and as these Provinces are situated on the border of Tibet, we have sent an official letter to Mr. Mautsetung, leader of the Chinese Communist Government, asking him to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet.
>
> We enclose herewith the true copy of the letter which our Government has sent to the leader of Chinese Communist Government, thinking that he may duly consider the matter. But in case the Chinese communist leader ignores our letter, and takes an aggressive attitude and send his troops toward Tibet, then the Government of Tibet will be obligated to defend her own country by all possible means. Therefore the Government of Tibet would earnestly desire to request every possible help from your Government.
>
> We would be most grateful if you would please consider extensive aid in respect of requirements for Civil and military purposes, and kindly let us have a favourable reply at your earliest possible opportunity.
>
> From,
> The Tibetan Foreign Bureau,
> Lhasa.[41]

The British informed the Americans and Indians about the letter they had received and assured the Indians that they would consult them before making any substantive reply. In the meantime they stalled the

41. FO371/76317, telegram no. 3462 from the United Kingdom Foreign Office (South Asian Department) to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 28 November 1949 (emphasis added). This was given to the British high commissioner in Delhi on 22 November by Surkhang Depön, the head of the Tibetan trade mission then in Delhi.

Tibetans with the following innocuous message: "His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has received the Tibetan Government's letter of 4th November, which he is considering with sympathy. Mr. Bevin takes the opportunity to assure the Government of Tibet of the continued goodwill and interest of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom."[42] The Americans informed Britain that they had received a similar request and told the British ambassador in Washington that they were going to send a reply that would discourage Tibetans from expecting any aid. The U.S. State Department also indicated that they felt the matter would be more properly left in the hands of India and Britain.[43]

Upon receiving these noncommittal messages from the United States and Britain, Tibet decided to send *missions* to the United States, Britain, Nepal, and India to seek civil and military aid as well as support for their cause in the United Nations. They decided also to send a mission to open negotiations with the Chinese Communists, and they welcomed a visit by the U.S. broadcaster Lowell Thomas and his son when the American ambassador to India asked Shakabpa's help in arranging this, for the visit by Thomas gave the Tibetan government an unexpected opportunity to garner much-needed publicity and sympathy in the United States and the rest of the Western world. Thomas and his son entered Tibet in the summer of 1949, and after their return to the United States they publicized the Tibetan point of view on their radio and television shows,[44] and they appealed for aid for Tibet in the highest echelons of the U.S. government.

In deciding who should be sent on the planned foreign missions, a number of the older, more conservative officials and abbots argued forcefully that because these missions were critical for the future of the Tibetan religious/secular state it was necessary to use the divine lottery to decide which officials' karma was appropriate.[45] Other more modern

42. FO371/76317, telegram no. 3461 from the British Foreign Office (South Asian Department) to the United Kingdom high commissioner, India, dated 28 November 1949. The telegram was given to Surkhang Depön in Delhi to convey to his government.

43. FO371/76317, telegram no. 3534 from the British Foreign Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 7 December 1949.

44. Shakabpa 1967: 298.

45. The phrase "karmically appropriate persons" is expressed in Tibetan as *skal ldan pa'i mi*. This idea derives from the belief that some people will have good karma from

and liberal lay officials such as Ngabö argued equally vigorously against this, insisting that such a method could result in English-speaking officials going to China and vice versa, and that whatever their karmic residue was, this made no sense. Ngabö said, "If you roll the lottery and ask should you jump from the eastern or southern side of the roof of the Potala, one of these will be chosen and you will jump," meaning that the lottery will always produce an answer, but not necessarily a reasonable one.[46]

The traditionalists prevailed, and the nominees selected by a divine lottery were:

China Mission: Headed by Shakabpa and Thubten Gyepo. Taring Dzasa was the English translator and Phüntso Tashi, the Dalai Lama's brother-in-law, was the Chinese translator.

United States and India Mission: Headed by Khencung Thubten Sanggye and Dingja, Dorje Gyentsen.

England Mission: Headed by Yuthok, Tashi Döndrup, and Khencung Thubten Khenrab.

Nepal Mission: Headed by Tshesum Phünkang and Khencung Lobsang Wanggye.

When these results were announced, Shakabpa, who had deceived the Chinese when the Tibetan trade mission was in China, immediately said that he did not want to go to China.[47] Thubten Sanggye, formerly of the Tibetan Bureau Office in China, was equally apprehensive about going to America. He recalled: "When I heard the news I was shocked and worried. On the one hand it was a big responsibility and I knew the Chinese [not the Americans] very well. . . . I was [also] scared that the Chinese might shoot me before I could reach America."[48]

On the day after the lottery, the selected officials went to the Kashag to receive their instructions and credentials. Thubten Sanggye said that he was given a passport and written instructions telling him to go to

past lives that makes them particularly suited to negotiate with either China or the United States. This examination of "past karmic influences" was a Tibetan tradition.

46. Horsur, interview.

47. Ibid.

48. Thubten Sanggye, interview.

America and seek every possible form of aid—funds, weaponry, and so forth; however, military aid in the form of U.S. troops was not mentioned in his instructions. Furthermore, he was instructed to appeal to the United Nations to issue an order to China to refrain from invading Tibet. He was told that if he could, he should go in person to the United Nations; if not, he should ask the United States to convey the appeal on Tibet's behalf. He was also given 100,000 Indian rupees. Richardson, the Indian representative in Lhasa, gave Thubten Sanggye a visa for India on his Tibetan passport, and he was told to go to the U.S. Embassy in India to get his visa for America.[49]

These missions were approved in December 1949 and prepared to leave almost immediately. The Tibetan government also sent urgent appeals to each country to which they were sending a mission (except, of course, China), asking for their support. The British appeal apparently mentioned Tibet's desire for help in gaining United Nations membership,[50] but the United States appeal (which was sent in separate but identical letters to President Truman and Secretary of State Acheson) did not. The U.S. letter, dated 22 December 1949, said:

The Tibetan Foreign Bureau
LHASA
Tibetan date . . 2/11/923
English date . . 22/12/49

TRANSLATION OF THE TIBETAN LETTER

Though Tibet has remained an Independent Country for about thirty years without any trouble, but recently the Chinese Communist leaders have announced over their Radio claiming Tibet as a part of Chinese territory and many other remarks about Tibet which are absolutely baseless and misleading. Besides the Chinese Communists have already occupied the border Provinces of Sinkiang, Sining (the Capital of Chinghai), and also Shikang.

Therefore it is impossible for us to remain indifferent at such a critical time. Hence we are deputing soon Lachag Khenchung Thupteen Sanghe [Thubten Sanggye] and Rimshi Dingja to lead a special Mission to your country for the purpose of obtaining aid from your Government.

49. Ibid.
50. FO371/84461, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 5 January 1950.

We would therefore be most grateful to your honour if you would kindly render every possible assistance to our Mission on their arrival in Washington.

The Honourable Mr. Truman,
President of the U.S.A.
Washington.[51]

At the same time, as a gesture of friendship, the Tibetans tried to influence the United States by allowing two Americans to cross through Tibet en route to Burma. The Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau's letter, dated 22 December 1949, to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi said:

> The Government of Tibet has just received a letter from our Commissioner of Eastern Tibet informing that two Americans on their way to a place called Lisu in Yunnan Province have arrived at Tsakalho in eastern Tibet, via Markham Bom on account of Communist danger and therefore applied for permission to enter Burma via Tibetan territory of Dzayul. Although no Foreigners are permitted to enter Tibet without permission from our Government, but *in view of the cordial relations between America and Tibet* and also in view of their real danger from Chinese Communists, we are glad to inform you that our Government have issued orders by radio message to our Commissioner at Chamdo to issue visa and Tibetan passports immediately to the two American subjects to proceed for Burma via Dzayul; and also similar orders have been issued to our Commissioner with regard to other American subjects in Chinese Territory who may be obliged under similar circumstances to evacuate and return via eastern Tibet.[52]

The necessity of replying to this letter placed the U.S. Embassy in India in a rather difficult situation, since the United States did not offi-

51. USFR, 193B.00/1-650. Lha'u rta ra ([Lhautara] 1982: 90–91), one of the trunyichemmo at this time, was overly specific when he recalled that these appeals said, "The Communists have taken over almost all the parts of China and now they are coming near to the Tibetan borders to seek to invade and take over our country. We have to challenge this and we need to seek military advice and help on how to stop the communists. And also we need to buy and borrow left-over WW II arms and ammunition as well as planes and vehicles togther with the personnel to use them, and U.S. dollars. We also hope to remain independent and join the United Nations, and need your help to accomplish these aims."

52. USFR, 893B.18/1-950, quoted in a letter from H. Donovan, counselor of the U.S. Embassy in Delhi, to the Department of State, dated 9 January 1950 (emphasis added).

cially recognize Tibet as an independent country. Their solution was summarized in a letter to the U.S. secretary of state dated 6 January 1950:

> Since the Embassy feared that an official reply in writing to the Tibetan Foreign Bureau on the part of the Embassy might be considered by the Tibetans as recognition of their independent status, it expressed its appreciation orally for the courtesy of the Government of Tibet to Mr. D. Bhakta, the informal representative of the Tibetan Government, who is still in Delhi awaiting the reply to the Tibetan request for assistance to the Secretary of State.[53]

At about the same time, the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau heard a radio speech by Ambassador Philip Jessup regarding U.S. support for anti-Communist nations in Asia. They immediately wrote him the following appeal and invitation, which was given to the U.S. ambassador in Delhi:

> The people of Tibet heard with pleasure over the radio your declaration in San Francisco stating purpose your visit to Southeast Asia is to find countries which need U.S. assistance to stop spread of Communism.
>
> For the last 38 years, Tibet has maintained its independence. The Chinese Communist Government has repeatedly announced Tibet is part of China which is definitely without any foundation.
>
> Tibet has decided oppose commie aggression. For this reason, special missions of Tibetan Government will shortly leave for the U.S. and other countries ask for help.
>
> Nevertheless, we do hope you can include a visit to Tibet in your programme after reaching India.
>
> After a favorable decision, kindly inform us beforehand by what means you will be traveling to our capital Lhasa.[54]

Again, the U.S. State Department feared encouraging the Tibetans and declined.

Soon after this, the U.S. secretary of state instructed the U.S. Embassy in Delhi to dissuade the Tibetans orally from sending a mission to the United States:

53. Ibid. It is not clear who this Bhakta was.

54. USFR, 793B.00/1-2050, telegram from the U.S. Embassy in India to the secretary of state, dated 20 January 1950.

DEPT believes that arrival such mission US WLD present complicated questions RE status and treatment and fears that publicity attendant overt move this nature might hasten CHI COMMIE action against Tibet. Finally, although type and nature aid not specified, DEPT considers it unlikely US WLD be prepared this time extend aid Tibet, particularly in view attitude GOI respecting Tibet and key position India with regard Tibet. DEPT accordingly believes discussions Tibetans may wish with US GOVT better conducted with EMB New Delhi than in Washington.

Unless you see objection, DEPT desires that you orally acknowledge to Tibetan REP Delhi receipt by Pres and SECY of Tibetan LTRS referred to above expressing appreciation and that you endeavor dissuade Tibetans from sending proposed mission emphasizing disadvantages Tibet resulting such move this time and pointing out greater desireability using EMB Delhi. DEPT suggests you discuss matter with BRIT and GOI REPS enlisting their assistance discouraging proposed mission if UR opinion this WLD be helpful.

Acheson[55]

The U.S. ambassador to India, Loy Henderson, did as instructed and relayed to Dean Acheson:

I called on Foreign Secretary Menon to obtain Indian views re Tibetan desire send mission Washington. Menon said in his opinion dispatch of such a mission would serve no purpose. He hoped, however, we would not suggest Delhi as avenue for discussions. If discussions would take place here there was danger wide publicity. Communist Government would probably charge that Delhi was becoming center of conspiracy to effect separation Tibet from China and might speed up plans for conquest Tibet. I asked him for suggestions as to where meeting between Tibetan and American representatives might take place. For US refuse to see Tibetan representatives at all, might have extremely depressing effect. He agreed it would be preferable for Tibetans not to be completely discouraged in their efforts to fortify their position against possible Chinese Communist invasion but said he could make no helpful suggestions as to place of meeting.

I learned from UK High Command that several days ago he received from London instructions to send through Indian MEA [Ministry of

55. USFR, 793B.02/1-1250, letter from Secretary of State Dean Acheson to the American Embassy, India, dated 12 January 1950.

> External Affairs] radio message from Hector McNeill to Tibetan Government UK hoped Tibet would reconsider its decision send mission to UK; such mission could achieve nothing since there was no possibility admittance Tibet in UN and since UK not in position extend direct assistance Tibet. In response to my question High Command said adjective "direct" used merely to soften negative tone of message. Message also indicated UK could not, even if in position to do so, aid Tibet without consultation with other interested powers.[56]

The U.S. Embassy then told the Tibetans through the Indian representative in Lhasa that the United States was not then in a position to lend effective aid to Tibet and that it was the opinion of the U.S. government that the "arrival in U.S. just now of Tibetan mission might be harmful rather than helpful to Tibet since it might strengthen the hand of elements advocating immediate invasion of Tibet, and that U.S. Government therefore hoped mission would not be sent and that if it had already left Lhasa it would be instructed not to continue on to U.S."[57] The Indians reported to the U.S. that "Tibetan authorities ... expressed considerable disappointment that no aid would be forthcoming from U.S."[58]

The British response was also sent through the Indian government:

> Mr. Bevin has received the Kashag's telegram dated 3rd December requesting assistance in obtaining U.N.O. membership. He is considering this message and the earlier message from the Tibetan Foreign Bureau and will send a response in due course.
>
> 2. In the meantime Mr. Bevin wishes to point out to the Kashag that admission to the U.N.O. is subject to the approval not merely of the U.N.O. Assembly but also of the Security Council where the veto is operative and for obvious reasons it would be quite unrealistic in present circumstances to hope to secure Tibet's admission to the U.N.O. Mr

56. USFR, 793B.02/1-2050, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 20 January 1950.

57. USFR, 793B.02/1-2050, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 20 January 1950; USFR, 793B.02/2-450, telegram from the U.S. Embassy in India to the secretary of state, dated 4 February 1950.

58. USFR, 793B.02/2-1050, telegram from the U.S. Embassy in India to the secretary of state, dated 10 February 1950.

Bevin therefore suggests that the proposed special Mission referred to in the Kashag's telegram should be suspended.[59]

The Kashag apparently refused to believe that Britain would let them down in their hour of need. They answered Britain's negative response by reiterating that they were sending a mission to Great Britain to seek aid:[60]

We have noted matter mentioned in your telegram (? from) Indian Mission received through our Foreign Office. As stated therein we understand there is difficulty in obtaining admission to United Nations Organization and suggested suspension proposed to Mission though definite reply will be despatched later after consideration for which we thank you.

2. The Mission is not repeat not only sent to help obtaining membership of U.N.O. but also to request help from provinces along the North East border of Tibet. Therefore, our Mission has already left Lhassa and we shall be grateful if you would kindly render necessary help and advice on their arrival there [*sic*] in consideration of our good relationship.[61]

The British again asked that the mission not be sent. Their attitude was aptly summed up in a minute by J. L. Taylor of the Foreign Office's Southeast Asia Department. "We also consider that since Tibet is of importance only in relation to the security of India any assistance to Tibet should be limited to supporting Indian policy in Tibet, since such a course [direct aid] might involve us in difficulties with China; moreover, if it came to light, it would furnish the Communists with more effective pretexts for propaganda against alleged Imperialism in Tibet."[62]

By the end of January 1950 the Kashag was forced to order the missions to the U.S. and Britain to halt in Gyantse but still could not

59. FO371/84461, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 5 January 1950.

60. USFR, 793B.02/1-2050, reported as being said by the British high commissioner in India, in a telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 20 January 1950.

61. FO371/84451, Kashag's reply, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 19 January 1950.

62. FO371/84465, minute by J. L. Taylor of the Southeast Asia Department of the Foreign Office, dated 26 January 1950.

bring themselves to recall them. Instead they deceived the National Assembly by withholding information concerning the negative replies from the United States and Britain, saying instead that they had decided it would be better to wait for the preliminary results of the China mission before allowing the other missions to proceed.[63]

POSITION OF THE NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT

In December 1949 and January 1950, the Indian government responded to the requests Tibet made to Dayal for more modern armaments by agreeing to supply the Tibetans with the mortars and mortar shells they wanted, although not the antiaircraft guns.

With regard to the political issue of the status of Tibet, there were two schools of thought within the Indian government. One, led by K. M. Panikkar, wanted to base Indian policy on the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, that is to say, recognizing a degree of Chinese suzerainty that amounted to direct Chinese control of Tibet. The other school held that India should continue to base her Tibet policy on the 1914 Simla Convention, advocating real Tibetan autonomy under a vaguer form of Chinese suzerainty.

The Indian government at this time maintained the Simla-based position and agreed to give Tibet limited diplomatic and military support. However, India absolutely ruled out any direct military intervention in case of a Chinese invasion and was worried that Tibet would misunderstand this limited support to mean that India was prepared to take their side against China.[64] The Indian foreign secretary, K. P. S. Menon, ex-

63. FO371/84453, monthly report of the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the period ending 15 February 1950. Interestingly, to this day former Tibetan officials on the other missions (e.g., Thubten Sanggye [interview] and Ngawang Döndrup [interview]) believe that it was Shakabpa's chicanery that resulted in their being held back while he went ahead to India. They believe that the United States had indicated that they would accept their mission. Such secrecy was not at all uncommon in Tibet with regard to foreign affairs.

64. FO371/84451, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 5 January 1950; FO371/84453, memorandum from the Indian Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 15 January 1950. The India foreign secretary, K. P. S. Menon, told the British that India regarded the defense of Nepal vital to her own security and was not prepared to tolerate

pressed this view to the British: "If the Communists were really determined to take Tibet nothing could stop them from doing so and there was no question of India giving Tibet any direct military support."[65]

India's Tibet policy was predicated on the primacy of Sino-Indian relations and the need for a peaceful solution to the Tibet issue. The Indian government strongly advised the Tibetan government not to provoke China; for example, it *should avoid all bellicose language and action in its dealings with the People's Republic of China.*[66] Menon expressed this view to the British in talking about the negative U.S. and British responses to Tibet's announcement of aid missions:

> [The] Government of India however were in entire [agreement] with these replies which they considered to be in the best interests of Tibet. He commented that it was most important not to lead Tibet "up the garden path."[67]

> It would be a mistake to encourage Tibetans to send such missions to (? foreign) capitals as it would only provoke Chinese and give Tibetans a false impression of their existing status.[68]

Thus, as the impending confrontation between Tibet and China drew nearer, Tibet had already been written off by both Britain and India. Both pursued a policy of verbal support of Tibetan autonomy while withholding meaningful diplomatic and military aid.

The United States, however, was becoming *more* interested in the Tibetan question. Now that Chiang Kai-shek had fallen, the Tibetans could be seen (and used) as an anti-Communist force in Asia. The State

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the revival of any shadowy Chinese claims to Nepal or Bhutan (FO371/84452, telegram from United Kingdom high commissioner in India to Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 9 February 1950).

65. FO371/84451, report of conversation with K. P. S. Menon in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 5 January 1950.

66. FO371/84453, memorandum from the Indian Mission in Lhasa to the political officer in Sikkim, dated 15 January 1950.

67. FO371/84452, report of conversation with K. P. S. Menon in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 9 February 1950.

68. FO371/84451, report of conversation with K. P. S. Menon in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 9 January 1950.

Department asked the U.S. ambassador in India to ask the British high commissioner discreetly what and how much military aid India was giving to Tibet, and the Americans directly asked the Indians their opinion of a U.S. plan to send a mission to Tibet. This suggestion, of course, prompted a negative reply from Nehru: "It would do more harm than good" and might hasten a Communist invasion.[69] In the meantime, attention focused on the Tibetan mission to China.

The Shakabpa mission was initially charged with opening negotiations with the Chinese Communists in China. Shakabpa, however, insisted on receiving a written statement from the government that all the gold purchased from America had been received before leaving. He therefore initially pleaded illness and delayed his group's departure.[70] It also appears that he wanted to convince Taktra that going directly to China would run counter to the appeals being made to the other Western countries and would place the Tibetans at a significant disadvantage by restricting their freedom of thought and action. While his arguments made sense, pressure on the Tibetan government to open negotiations increased daily as the Chinese Communists issued a stream of statements and threats regarding the "liberation" of Tibet. Radio Peking and the Soviet Union's TASS stated that the Tibetan missions to the United States and Britain were illegal and that "any country receiving such an 'illegal mission' will be considered as entertaining hostile intentions with regard to the Chinese People's Republic." They claimed that the people of Tibet demanded to join the People's Republic of China and said that if the Lhasa authorities sent representatives to Peking for negotiations in accordance with this wish, they would be received.[71]

The regent ultimately ordered the mission to open negotiations, but not in China itself. The plan was to meet with a representative of the

69. USFR, 793B.02/1-2050, report of discussion with K. P. S. Menon cited in a telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 20 January 1950; USFR, 793B.56/3-150, telegram from the U.S. State Department to the U.S. Embassy in India, dated 1 March 1950.

70. Shakabpa, interview. In the tense political climate of Lhasa, Shakabpa apparently feared his enemies would try to attack him on that issue.

71. FO371/84451, copy of a Reuter's news dispatch; FO371/84453, monthly report of the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the period ending 15 February 1950.

new Communist government in some area near China.[72] The Tibetan government's letter of instructions to Shakabpa specified four topics to be discussed:

1. The unanswered letter to Chairman Mao Tse-tung from the Foreign Bureau of the Government of Tibet;
2. The atrocious radio announcements from Sining and Peking;
3. Securing an assurance that the territorial integrity of Tibet will not be violated; and
4. Informing the Government of China that the people and Government of Tibet will not tolerate any interference in successive rule of the Dalai Lama, and they will maintain their independence.[73]

With this rather unrealistic and undiplomatic charge, the China mission left Lhasa on 10 February and arrived in Kalimpong, India, on 7 March 1950. The work of this team and the subsequent Chinese invasion of Eastern Tibet are the subjects of the next chapter.

72. FO371/84453, monthly reports of the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the periods ending 15 January and 15 February 1950. In March 1950 J. Taring wrote to A. J. Hopkinson (the former political officer in Sikkim) in England: "I have [been] appointed as an official interpreter to the diplomatic mission to China who are on their way now. It is not that we are to go direct to China but [we] will stay at some suitable place from where we can get into touch with authorities of the New Government of China to discuss future relations between the two governments." (IOR, Mss.Eur.D998/24); Shakabpa (interview); Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 409–10.

73. Shakabpa 1967: 300; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 409–11.

18

THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY INVADES

Immediately after the Reting conspiracy was crushed in 1947, Lhalu Shape was sent to Eastern Tibet for a three-year term as governor-general. He was still serving there in December 1949, when General Liu Wen-hui, the Nationalist governor of Sikang Province, voluntarily transferred his allegiance (and that of his army) to the new Communist government, giving them control of all of Sikang up to the Tibetan border.

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

On 1 January 1950, when Radio Peking's New Year's broadcast announced that the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) tasks for 1950 included the liberation of Tibet, Hainan, and Formosa from British and American imperialism, Lhalu confidently assured his officers: "They will not come yet. . . More troops will be sent from Lhasa . . [as will] modern arms. . . . We shall not let the Chinese cross the [Upper Yangtse] river."[1]

A more objective appraisal of the Tibetan position in Kham reveals that the Tibetan military and political situation in Kham was insecure. At this time Lhalu commanded parts of five regiments, which together

1. Ford 1958: 11, 21.

totaled only about 3,500 regular soldiers.[2] Gadang Shigatse Regiment under commanders Mucha and Karchung and Jadang Regiment under commanders Sharchang Surpa and Phulunga each had about 1,000 troops; Datang Regiment under Commander Derge Sey and Nadang Regiment under Commander Tshögaw each had about 500 troops; and Gyantse (Chadang) Artillery Regiment under Captain Dugara had about 100. In addition, there were about 100 Khadang Regiment troops serving as Lhalu's bodyguard, and about 100 Nyadang Regiment troops under Commander Laya Charipa.[3] This small force was required to defend a two-hundred-mile border along the west bank of the Upper Yangtse from south of Markham Gartok to the area north of Dengo, as well as the area south of Chinese-held Jyekundo and Nangchen between the Salween and Mekong rivers (see Map 5).

Lhalu's troops, moreover, were poorly trained and disciplined and, in general, ineptly led. Their numbers included soldiers in their fifties and even sixties as well as youths under sixteen. Most of the soldiers had their families with them and thus not only had to worry about themselves and the enemy, but also about the fate of their wives and children. The commanders of these regiments, with one exception, had received no military training, and a number, such as Phulunga, were known to be timid. This is not surprising, since the Tibetan government purposely avoided creating a specially trained corps of commanders, instead maintaining the policy that *any* official could serve as an army commander.

Facing these forces in Kham was a battle-hardened and well-led unit of the People's Liberation Army which probably consisted of 20,000 troops; behind them stood the People's Liberation Army of about 5,000,000 well-equipped troops.[4]

The situation facing Lhalu was complicated by the geo-strategic lia-

2. The figure of about 3,500 regular army troops is confirmed by Chinese reports of the number of Tibetans killed or captured. A Chinese military communiqué in *Jenmin Shou-ts'e* (1951): wu–25, as cited in Liang (1964: 2–3) listed eight Tibetan regiments in Kham and stated that a total of 3,341 Tibetan troops were either killed, wounded, surrendered, captured, or defected.

3. The regimental breakdown was given by Lhalu (interview), Maya (interview), and Horsur (interview), all of whom served in Kham at that time. A few troops of the Thadang Regiment may also have been stationed in Kham.

4. Clubb 1964: 312.

bility of Chamdo as the District headquarters. The main route to Lhasa runs east-west between Chamdo and Lho Dzong and is bisected by a north-south trail that comes down from Riwoche and joins the east-west road at the crossroads of Lagong-Ngamda. If the northern military front collapsed and the Chinese were able to overrun the Tibetan garrison at Riwoche and occupy that crossroads, the escape route back to Lhasa would be cut and the entire Tibetan force trapped.

An equally important impediment to the military defense of Kham was the ambivalent attitude of the local population toward the Lhasa government. Sizable cultural and linguistic differences existed between the Khambas and Central Tibetans,[5] and Khambas resented Lhasa officials, who considered Khambas stupid and uncouth and who saw Kham as a place for them to become rich at the expense of the local population. Particularly abusive to local Khambas were the virtually unlimited use by Lhasa officials of free (corvée) transport for their personal trading ventures and Khambas' lack of access to positions of authority and power in the government. With only a few exceptions, all major provincial officials were brought in from Lhasa. An Indian intelligence report commented in 1943 that "in any clash on the Sino-Tibetan border the local Khambas will merely sit on the fence and come down on the winning side."[6] Lhalu understood this and attempted to improve relations with the local Khambas when he first became governor-general in 1947, but he and the Lhasa officials gradually slid back into their traditional behavior.[7]

Realizing the fragility of Lhasa-Khamba relations, the Chinese Communists devised an effective propaganda campaign aimed at alienating the Khambas from the Lhasa government. Using well-known Khamba leaders such as Chagotsang Tomten and religious figures such as Geda Lama, the Panchen Lama, Geshe Sherab Gyatso, and the Sera Che Abbot who fled to China in 1945, the Communists proclaimed that they were coming to improve the lives of Khambas and not to

5. Many Khamba dialects were, if not completely unintelligible to those who spoke the government's Lhasa dialect, at least nearly so.

6. FO371/41587, intelligence report dated 23 November 1943.

7. Maya, interview; H. E. Richardson (interview) recalled Lhalu telling him just before leaving for Kham that there was a critical need to improve relations with the Khambas.

change the existing social and religious systems. (More will be said of this below.) Consequently, not only was the Tibetan position geographically vulnerable and its army small, ill-equipped, inadequately trained and poorly led, but the local Khamba population did not back the Tibetan government strongly, instead viewing the coming confrontation as one between Lhasa and China. The later Western image of the Khambas as bitter enemies of the Chinese Communists was not in the least evident in 1949–1951.

Seeing this situation, Lhalu informed Lhasa in 1949 that he needed new troops and automatic weapons to defend Kham against a Chinese Communist attack.[8] Lhasa responded in March 1950 by sending a shipment of Bren and Sten guns and a noncommissioned officer, Rupön Sonam Tashi of the Bodyguard Regiment, to train Lhalu's troops in the use of the guns.[9]

Chamdo's strength also improved considerably with the arrival in December 1949 of the English wireless operator R. Ford with three sets of wireless equipment and four Indian trainees of Tibetan descent to serve as wireless operators. For the first time, Lhalu could communicate directly with Lhasa. In February 1950 Lhalu asked Ford if he could hasten the training of these operators so that Lhalu could send them to the outlying posts. Ford agreed, and soon afterward two trainees were sent to Dengo, a small village on the west bank of the Upper Yangtse in Derge, where a Tibetan district official was stationed. Situated on the main route running from Tachienlu to Jyekundo, Dengo was strategically important: it would be able to warn Chamdo if the Chinese tried to attack by the Jyekundo-Riwoche route.[10]

Lhalu also increased his military strength by conscripting a Khamba militia. According to Ford, Lhalu took this action despite the reservations of some of his staff, who feared that such a Khamba force might turn against the Tibetans.[11] Three main units were formed at this time: the Shotalhosum troops were recruited from Shopando, Dar Dzong, and Lho Dzong, the Po troops from the three subdivisions of Po, and

8. Maya, interview.
9. Ford 1958: 33.
10. Ibid.: 37–38.
11. Ibid.: 47.

the Matragongsum troops from the three regions of Traya, Markham, and Gongjo. Each of these units was attached to a different regular army regiment. Other militia appear to have been conscripted from Chamdo, Riwoche, and Dengo. It is difficult to estimate the total number, but Maya, the Tibetan official who went to Po to collect militia, said that Po sent 488 soldiers and estimated that the total militia recruited numbered around 1,500 to 2,000.[12] Lhalu also set up a spy network in Chinese Kham and tried to develop good relations with sympathetic Khamba leaders.[13]

In early 1950, as Lhalu was trying to bolster his forces, the Southwest Military District was given the task of beginning the liberation of Tibet by conquering Kham.[14] At a mid-January meeting in Chungking headed by General Liu Po-che'ng and Teng Hsiao-ping (the current head of the Chinese state), detailed instructions about the military attack on Tibet were distributed and officers and representatives were asked to complete their preparations for the invasion by September 1950.[15]

The plan centered on a Blitzkrieg-like series of lightning thrusts through forced marches aimed at encircling the entire Tibetan force. One thrust was to be along a northern route from a base in Kanze, and the other along a southern route from a base in Batang. These would strike behind Lhalu's Chamdo force and cut off his escape routes. A third thrust would strike in the center, directly at Chamdo. Frontline command headquarters were established at this time and the construction of a motorable road from Tachienlu to Kanze became the overriding task. This road was completed by the end of August 1950. The invasion force was given six months of intensive training, including both military and political skills. The Chinese were trained in high-altitude warfare and in surviving on local foods. Great stress was placed

12. Maya, interview. Chinese sources later recorded 2,393 militia captured or killed (cited in Liang 1964: 2–3).

13. Lhalu, interview.

14. At this time the new government in China had established an office called the People's Revolutionary Military Council (headed by Mao Tse-tung). That office divided the nation into six large military districts: North, Northeast, Northwest, South, Southeast, and Southwest. Each of these districts was headed by a general who had both military and political authority (Clubb 1964: 313).

15. Khreng 1982: 209.

on developing physical strength so that the troops could run and march rapidly over long distances.[16]

The philosophical dimension of the invasion plan was based on the military ideas of Sun Tzu, a contemporary of Confucius whom Mao Tse-tung considered to be his "teacher." Sun Tzu had written: "To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting," and "Know the enemy and yourself, and in a hundred battles [you will suffer] no defeat."[17] For the Chamdo campaign strategy, this was taken to mean that every effort should be made to woo local Tibetans to the side of the People's Republic of China or at least to persuade them to neutrality in the war between China and Tibet.

The soldiers were taught the local religion, customs, and language, and they were under strict orders not to requisition even a cup of tea from local people. They had to talk and act as if they were brothers who had come to help, and to ignore all insults and provocations. They were to show deep respect for local religious institutions. If they needed animals or food, they were to take them only with the local Tibetans' assent, and they were to pay in silver coins for them. One Chinese soldier wrote that at one point in the actual attack the local Khambas sold them only rotten *tsamba* (barley flour), and they had to accept this calmly and not threaten the Khambas with their weapons.[18]

Thus, the Chinese made an elaborate show of support for the status quo in Kham (and, by extension, Tibet), with the aim of alleviating the fears of the Khambas, who were firmly committed to the traditional social, religious, and economic systems but did not like to pay heavy taxes to the Lhasa government. The Chinese Communists promised that the only change would be the elimination of heavy taxes and that the Chinese government would help to develop and improve the area. The Communist government issued a proclamation in Kham:

> Now all our People's Liberation Army units that are coming to Tibet [will]: protect religious freedom; respect local customs and practices; protect all monasteries and temples; the soldiers will not stay in monas-

16. Ibid.
17. Sun Tzu, as cited in Clubb 1964.
18. Khreng 1982: 214.

teries without permission of the abbot, and the army will not destroy monastery buildings or destroy any religious items in the monasteries; it is not permitted to interfere or harm the monastic prayers of monks or religious achievements and if there are any violaters of this they will be severely punished; these rules should be memorized by all our soldiers and leaders and villagers.

Southwest Military Headquarters.[19]

A second military proclamation to the PLA troops said:

Three General Rules and Eight Things to Keep in Mind.

I. The Three General Rules:
   1. You must obey orders.
   2. You cannot take even one needle from the masses.
   3. You must turn over to the government things acquired from the enemy.

II. The Eight Things to Keep in Mind:
   1. You must speak gently [to the people].
   2. You must buy and sell honestly.
   3. You must return the things you borrow.
   4. Things which are broken or lost must be replaced.
   5. You may not beat or scold people.
   6. You may not destroy or harm the crops.
   7. You must not tease or bother females.
   8. You may not abuse prisoners of war.[20]

Meanwhile, the Shakabpa mission sought to open negotiations with the new Chinese government.

TIBET OPENS NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHINA

The Dalai Lama's older brother, Gyalo Dündrup, was married to a Chinese woman and the initial contact between Tibet and the Chinese Communists was made through her father, Chu Shih-kuei, who was a member of Peking's Mongolian and Tibet Commission Office. Appar-

19. Copied and translated from the original document (in Tibetan) on exhibit in the Lhasa Museum, Lhasa, Tibet, November 1985.

20. Copied from the original by an anonymous Tibetan refugee intelligence officer in India; translation mine.

ently a letter was sent from Lhasa to Chu asking the Chinese to send a representative to discuss Sino-Tibetan relations in a neutral place near China, such as Hong Kong.[21]

Shakabpa and his colleagues then left for Kalimpong, arriving in early March 1950. On 8 April, they received an informal reply from Chu that said the new Chinese government would send a representative and the Tibetan delegation should go to Hong Kong immediately. The letter also said, however, that it was not acceptable for the Tibetans to come as foreigners.[22] Shakabpa made plans to arrive in Hong Kong (by airplane) by 16 April, and he immediately asked the Indian government to provide foreign currency and visitors' visas for Hong Kong. To the surprise of the Tibetans, the British refused to allow them to enter Hong Kong.

In late February, before Shakabpa reached India, the Tibetan government had asked the Indian government to issue their mission diplomatic visas for Singapore and Hong Kong. The Passport Office of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs contacted the British high commissioner in Delhi, who informed London that "it seems doubtful whether issue of a diplomatic visa is desirable having regard to fact that Tibet is autonomous and not independent."[23] J. L. Taylor of the Southeast Asia Department of the British Foreign Office disagreed:

> We must avoid offending the Tibetans if we can: therefore we should, I think, be prepared to repeat what we did in 1948 and grant ordinary visa on the Tibetan passport. Colonial Office are going to let us know their views when they have consulted the Governors. If the Governors of Hong Kong and Singapore agree, we should, I think, put no obstacles in Tsipon Shakapba's way: his negotiations may help to achieve a solution which would leave Tibet a greater measure of autonomy than a military conquest by China would.[24]

21. FO371/84453, monthly report of the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the period ending 15 March 1950. Shakabpa cites Gyalo Dondrup's father-in-law's name as "Hu thru-hu."

22. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 413. This meant that the Chinese expected them to come willing to accept Tibet's status as a part of China.

23. FO371/84468, telegram from the United Kindgom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 24 February 1950.

24. FO371/84468, minute by J. L. Taylor of the Southeast Asia Department of the British Foreign Office, dated 27 February 1950.

In response to this, P. D. Coates of the Foreign Office's Far East Department, wrote:

I am not at all sure I agree with Mr. Taylor. We do not recognise Tibet as an independent state, nor do we recognise it as wholly a part of China. In these circumstances it wd. seem inappropriate to issue visas either on Tibetan or on Chinese passports, and I gather from Mr. Taylor's minute above that apart from an accidental lapse in 1948 it has in fact been the practice to avoid doing either and that visas have been issued to Tibetans on affidavits, etc. I wd. personally be inclined to favour following precedent, but it might be of use to know what the practice of other countries is when Tibetans ask them for visas.

It seems to me somewhat doubtful whether the presence of a Tibetan representative in the imperialist colonies of Singapore and Hong Kong is likely to do the Tibetan cause any good. It opens a further gate for Chinese allegations that Tibet is just a British puppet-state (and though the matter is probably not of much consequence, we shall get our share of the inspired agitation on these lines). And I should think that the local climates will soon polish off the unfortunate representative. If S.E. Asia Dept. feel that he shd. go to one of these two places F.E. Dept. wd. prefer Singapore. The less Hong Kong gets involved in such matters the better.

On the whole I see no good results from the proposal and some inconveniences, but I imagine that the Tibetans have set their minds on sending him there. They are, in my view, optimistic if they think they can negotiate with the Chinese Communists. Once Chinese troops enter Tibet, and that is sure to be one of the Chinese prerequisites, the game is up, and any safeguards which the Tibetans may previously have obtained on paper will soon be disregarded.

We shd. inform Peking when we have decided what we are going to do.[25]

This prompted an official in the Foreign Office whose signature is illegible to write:

Two questions arise:

a) Are we going to allow Tsipon Shagappa to enter British territory, knowing that he proposes to negotiate from it with the Chinese Govt.?

25. FO371/84468, P. D. Coates' response to J. L. Taylor's minute, dated 1 March 1950.

b) If so, are we going to give him (1) a diplomatic visa, or (2) an ordinary visa, and on what travel document, a Tibetan passport or an identity certificate?

2. We may agree with Mr. Coates that, of the two British territories T.S. [Tsipön Shakabpa] has suggested, Singapore is from our point of view preferable. We can at once agree also that T.S. is not likely to get much change out of the Chinese. But I do not think we should obstruct his negotiations, if that is what the Tibetans want. *We can hardly wash our hands of Tibet, as we seem to have done, and then prevent her from taking her own line.* Further, since all seem agreed that it is only a matter of time before China swallows Tibet, the process may as well be as bloodless as possible: the Tibetans, if they are going to lose anyway, may as well do so by peaceful negotiations as after a futile resistance. True, negotiations may fail and resistance follow; but they had better be tried.

3. India seems to have offered no opinion, if our policy now is to keep just behind India in dealing with Tibet we had better find out what the Government of India think. I have asked CRO (Mr. Maclennan) by phone to consider doing this. The C.O. have already arranged to collect the opinions of the Governors, Singapore and Hong Kong. When we have these views we can consider question (a) further.

4) A diplomatic visa is out of the question. But we need to find out what travel document T.S. holds. I have therefore asked Mr. Maclennan to add this enquiry to his references to Delhi.

5) Apparently the Government of India are referring the matter to Passport Control. Wd. Mr. Taylor please send a self-contained minute to P.C. asking them to consult us when the Government of India's reference comes in?[26]

The British deputy high commissioner in Calcutta responded that Shakabpa was traveling on a Tibetan government passport, dated 2 February 1950, that described him as "leader of special mission towards China for Tibet's independence."[27] The Indian government refused to make an official statement to the British, but K. P. S. Menon, the Indian foreign secretary, indicated that he thought no good would be achieved by any Tibetan attempt to contact the Chinese and that the

26. FO371/84468, response to P. D. Coates' response to J. L. Taylor, signature illegible, dated 2 March 1950 (emphasis added).

27. FO371/84468, telegram of the United Kingdom deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 4 May 1950.

journey should be postponed.[28] The British also got the impression that the "Government of India will clearly be happy if we refuse the necessary visas. On the other hand they do not seem anxious to take any action or give any advice themselves in the matter."[29] In early April the Indians apparently concluded that they could keep an eye on these discussions if they were held in India, so they directly advised the Tibetan mission to conduct their discussions with the new Chinese ambassador, who was expected to arrive in New Delhi soon.[30] Shakabpa telegraphed this information to Lhasa but was told to proceed as planned to Hong Kong.[31]

The Tibetan government's hope that the mission would proceed quickly to Hong Kong was dealt another blow when the British governors of Hong Kong and Singapore responded negatively to London's query about the Shakabpa visit. The Hong Kong governor wrote:

> We do not wish person named [Shakabpa] to come to Hong Kong to contact Peking presumably through intermediaries. We have enough problems on our hands already. We were particularly impressed with person named when he passed through Hong Kong two years ago. He is a slippery customer and obviously out to make the best deal he can with Peking. There is no reason why he should not carry on any necessary arrangements from India.[32]

The Singapore governor similarly said: "I am not (repeat not) in favour of diplomatic visa for Singapore being granted to tsipon Shagap nor of his conducting his negotiations with Peking from correspondence from Tibet or India."[33] Britain then stalled, telling the Tibetans that before

28. FO371/84468, report of conversation with Indian foreign secretary K. P. S. Menon in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 8 March 1950.

29. FO371/84468, report of conversation with K. P. S. Menon in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 13 March 1950.

30. FO371/84453, monthly report of the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the week ending 16 April 1950.

31. FO371/84468, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 19 April 1950.

32. FO371/84468, telegram from A. Grantham, governor of Hong Kong, to the secretary of state for the Colonies, London, dated 9 March 1950.

33. FO371/84468, telegram from the governor of Singapore to the secretary of state for the Colonies, dated 20 March 1950.

deciding whether to grant visas, they would like to have further information about the mission's objectives.[34]

In the meantime, Shakabpa's group had received further word from China confirming that they would send someone to meet them in Hong Kong—this time, however, referring to that person as a "guide," implying that he was being sent solely to take them to China.[35] The Tibetans set their travel plans and, as was customary, went to the West Bengal government on 4 May to obtain visas for Hong Kong.[36] When they requested "diplomatic" visas, they were told by the West Bengal government that no instructions had been received about issuing them diplomatic visas, but the Indian government had authorized them to issue "gratis official courtesy" visas. The Tibetans were unhappy, but agreed. The West Bengal government then stamped their Tibetan passports with these visas for Hong Kong.[37]

However, the West Bengal government had made a mistake and the visas were not accepted by the British. The genesis of this "mistake" was traced to a minute that a joint secretary of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs placed in the files of the ministry's Passport and Visa section: it said that *if* visas were issued to the Tibetan mission, they should be official, not diplomatic. This was intended as a warning not to handle the matter in a routine way, but when the West Bengal government telegraphed for authorization to issue the visas, the Passport and Visa section saw the minute and wired back instructions to issue "official" (not diplomatic) visas.[38]

Thus the Tibetan mission obtained what they believed to be valid visas for Hong Kong and immediately purchased airline tickets on

34. FO371/84468, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 7 April 1950.

35. FO371/84468, report of conversation with Shakabpa in a telegram from the United Kingdom deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 4 May 1950.

36. The Tibetans had also gone to the British deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to seek his help in securing diplomatic visas, but he agreed only to contact the high commissioner in New Delhi (ibid.).

37. FO371/84468, telegram from the United Kingdom deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 5 May 1950.

38. FO371/84468, telegram from the British deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 5 May 1950; USFR, 793B.00/5–1750, reported in a telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 1 May 1950.

BOAC for 4 June. The British high commissioner in New Delhi soon heard about the visas, however, and instructed his deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to arrange for them to be withdrawn.[39] The high commissioner also took up the issue with the Indian government who acknowledged that a mistake had occurred and ordered West Bengal to withdraw the visas, telling the Tibetans only that their "visas were granted prematurely and that question of grant of official or diplomatic visas is still under consideration."[40]

When the Tibetans were notified of this, they refused to turn over their passports, explaining that they were made from fragile Tibetan paper that could be permanently marred by a stamp of cancellation.[41] Shakabpa wrote of these events in a letter to the British deputy high commissioner in Calcutta:

> In accordance with official visas already issued on our Tibetan passports on 4th May, 1950, we have booked our air passages with BOAC to fly from Calcutta on 4th June, 1950, and have also obtained return tickets within a (?year). After having arranged everything the passport authorities of West Bengal Government now inform us that Government of India has referred to His Majesty's Government to obtain diplomatic visas for (?us) and that official visas already issued to us must be canceled in the meantime. We have told them that we are glad that such friendly courtesy is being shown us in order to obtain diplomatic (?visa)s for us but we have requested that official visas which have already been issued to us may be canceled simultaneously with issue of (?diplomatic) visas. Otherwise we are compelled to travel with official visas as we have booked our air passages to fly on 4th June, 1950, and we have also fixed up our date of arrival in Hong Kong.[42]

Shakabpa and the others went to Kalimpong on 14 May to consult with the political officer in Sikkim.[43] In the meantime, the Indian offi-

39. FO371/84468, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta, dated 6 May 1950.

40. FO371/84468, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta, dated 8 May 1950.

41. FO371/84468, telegram from the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 12 May 1950.

42. FO371/84468, letter from Shakabpa dated 24 May, cited in a telegram from the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 26 May 1950.

43. FO371/84468, telegram from the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 12 May 1950. Shakabpa apparently

cer in Lhasa informed the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Bureau that it was Britain, not India, that had ordered the visas canceled.[44] The Bureau at once telegraphed to the British high commissioner, ostensibly in response to the earlier request for clarification about the aims of the proposed mission to China:

> Object of Mission to China is to attempt to arrange with Chinese Government continuance of Tibet's present independent status. Mission has been ordered to get in touch with Chinese Government from Hong Kong. If they are summoned to China they will report to Tibet Government for further orders. Tibet Government hope that facilities for entry into Hong Kong will be arranged.[45]

The British high commissioner asked London for instructions, stating in his communiqué that "Indian authorities hope reply will be negative. They have suggested that if so, Shakabpa might be invited to come to Delhi in order that I [the high commissioner] might let him have orally some explanation of disadvantages of proposal [to go to Hong Kong.]"[46] London took the advice of the Indian government and on 26 May instructed the British high commissioner in India that the visas for *Hong Kong* should not be recognized; however, if the Tibetans insisted on going to *China* to talk, "transit" visas for Hong Kong (en route to China) could be issued, not on the Tibet government passports but only on "affidavits of identity." London's instructions and rationale were as follows:

> 2. Save for one mistake in 1948 we have hitherto declined to recognise Tibetan passports, and we are unwilling to recognise them now. The travel documents which the Tibetans hold are therefore not acceptable to us and the visas on them are valueless.
>
> 3. Government of India were aware Tibetan request for visas was under consideration, and in our views should have arranged that visas

was unsuccessful in contacting the Indian political officer in Sikkim (reported by Shakabpa in FO371/84468, telegram from the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 3 June 1950).

44. FO371/84453, monthly report of the Indian Mission in Lhasa for the period ending 15 May 1950.

45. FO371/84468, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 15 May 1950.

46. Ibid.

> were not issued without our authority. West Bengal Government's action was most embarrassing.
>
> 4. Since the transfer of power in India we have consistently taken line that Tibetan affairs are now primarily the concern of the Government of India, who do not wish the Mission to go to Hong Kong. Nor does the Governor want them there, and we should not wish to have unofficial Chinese Communists agents negotiating in Hong Kong. The Government of India doubtless share our view that in fact the Chinese would refuse to negotiate with the Mission in Hong Kong and would ask them to go to Peking, in which event the Mission would lose all freedom of action. It seems therefore that the Mission should either stay in India and negotiate with the Chinese Ambassador when he arrives, or go to China itself. The former would be preferable, as the Government of India themselves think.
>
> 5. We should be grateful if Government of India could explain matters to Mission and advise them accordingly.
>
> 6. For your own information, it is important that we should not lay ourselves open to the charge either from the Tibetans or from the Chinese of having prevented the Mission from going to China on technical grounds such as the refusal to issues visas, if it is a fact (and we are not yet convinced of this) that the Mission sincerely intend to negotiate with the Chinese. If in the light of their discussions with the Mission the Government of India are satisfied that Tibetans are in earnest, and cannot persuade them to negotiate in Delhi, we should be prepared to ask Governor of Hong Kong *to grant transit visas of limited duration (to be given on affidavits of identity) solely to allow the Mission to go to China.*[47]

At virtually the same time, on 24 May, Shakabpa wrote from Kalimpong to the British deputy high commissioner in Calcutta asking him to help arrange for the mission to leave for Hong Kong. Shakabpa's letter appealed to him on the grounds of the long friendship between Britain and Tibet. It reiterated the events surrounding the visa issuance and withdrawal and, after indicating that they intended to travel on their "official" visas on 4 June as planned, said:

> Owing to fact that there are not many days left for our departure we sincerely hope that good and friendly relations existing between our

47. FO371/84468, telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 26 May 1950 (emphasis added).

> Governments for so many years will be considered and that you will be good enough to help us so that we may travel with official visa already granted and that a favourable reply may kindly be sent at a very early date.[48]

The British high commissioner responded to Shakabpa's letter by telegram on 1 June. He still gave no clear reason for the British refusal to grant visas but now overtly seconded the Indian government's advice that the Tibetans should meet with the Chinese in India:

> Thank you for your letter the 24th May informing me that you wished to proceed to Hong Kong. I regret the delay that has been occasioned but visas granted on your passports were given in error since question of your proceeding to Hong Kong had not yet been fully considered by United Kingdom Government and Hong Kong authorities. Your Mission's request is still under consideration but no certain date for decision can be given. You will appreciate that present situation in Hong Kong is such that considerable difficulties would stand in the way of your Mission conducting negotiations there and meanwhile you may wish to consider suggestion that it would be more suitable and favourable for your Mission to conduct negotiations in India with representatives of the Chinese Government when they reach India.[49]

In the meantime, however, the Indian government had reversed its position and now favored negotiations in Hong Kong. As a result of their new position, the British high commissioner changed his recommendation to London:

> We have discussed paragraphs 2 and 4 with Ministry of External Affairs [of the Indian government] who inform us that they have already put considerable pressure on Tibet Mission to remain in India to negotiate with Chinese representatives here but without success and do not feel able to do more. Government of India consider mission's intention is as stated in Tibet Government's message quoted in paragraph 1 of my telegram 1447 not to proceed beyond Hong Kong without referring to Lhasa for instruction. After further consideration Government of India

48. FO371/84468, letter from Shakabpa dated 24 May, cited in a telegram from the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 26 May 1950.

49. FO371/84468, cited in telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, London, dated 1 June 1950.

have come to think that refusal of visas for Hong Kong or even to granting of limited transit visas would tend to throw Tibetans into Chinese camp by suggesting they should proceed to Peking direct. They consider it would be wiser and more graceful to give Mission an opportunity to save its face by granting it full facilities and diplomatic visas for a limited stay in Hong Kong where contact with Chinese Communists (if made at all) could be made without Mission losing its free action and where Governor might be in a position to influence their decision if an invitation were extended to Mission to visit Peking. If no contact were made within a (corrupt group) time Mission might then be asked to leave (?City).

2. Government of India further point out that in these circumstances it would be tactless to refuse to accept Tibetan passports particularly as in addition to 1948 precedent, they quote grant of visas on Tibetan passports to 4 Tibetans in 1914 and to Mr. Phela Se on recommendation of Sir Charles Bell about 1920.

3. I am replying to Mission letter of 24th May which was addressed to me in terms similar to those quoted in Calcutta telegram No. 471 to me suggesting Mission should remain in India to contact Chinese here. So far this situation has not been made direct by us to Mission.

4. If this fails alternatives are either (1) to refuse visas entirely thereby incurring unnecessary ill will of Tibetans; or (2) to grant visas for a limited period for Hong Kong as suggested by Government of India in paragraph 1 above, although this may possibly create some embarrassment for Governor of Hong Kong.

(?Para. 5) I recommend that course 2 should be followed as in best interest of all concerned and that decision should be reached as soon as possible. In view of paragraph 2 above I consider no repeat no difficulty should be raised over passports.[50]

On 2 June the Tibetans again informed the British deputy high commissioner in Calcutta of their intent to leave. They also tried to impress on him the urgency of their mission by telling him of reports of a military clash between the People's Liberation Army and Tibetan forces in Kham (discussed below) and of Chinese complaints that the Tibetan mission had left Lhasa six months earlier but had not yet reached Hong Kong. They also informed him that the Chinese had now agreed to

50. Ibid.

send a "representative" rather than simply a "guide" to meet them in Hong Kong.[51]

In the meantime, London had informed the governor of Hong Kong of the change in opinion regarding the Tibetans proceeding to Hong Kong and asked him specifically for his views on: "(i) Your estimate of the Communist reaction. (ii) Whether you wish Peking's views to be ascertained. (iii) For what period the visas should be issued. (iv) What steps could and should be taken to ensure the departure of the Mission, either to China, or back to Calcutta, within the period allowed. (v) What effect the visit will have on your own problems and on public opinion in the territory. (vi) What steps you wish to take to make clear your complete disassociation from the Mission."[52] At about the same time, the British Embassy in Peking was also questioned by London regarding this. The governor of Hong Kong responded the next day, saying that as a last resort he would accept the Tibetan mission but he wanted a variety of other restrictions laid down:

> Negotiations in Hong Kong of virtual surrender of Tibet to Central Peoples' Government might very well have serious effect on local morale. If there is any unpleasantness between Mission and Central Peoples' Government we are likely to be blamed. I am therefore strongly opposed to Mission coming here and I hope it will still be possible for High Commissioner, Delhi and of Calcutta to persuade them not (repeat not) to come. In this connection you will have seen Peking telegram of 1st June stating that Chinese Chargé d'Affairs for India expects to arrive in Hong Kong on 8th June en route to Delhi. Surely Mission would be less subject to pressure if they were to negotiate in India rather than in Hong Kong.
>
> 2. As a last resort, however, if you and Foreign Office consider that there are overriding considerations why Mission should not (repeat not) be prevented from coming to Hong Kong I would be prepared with great reluctance to agree.
>
> 3. Answers to paragraph 5 of your telegram No. 877 are
>
> (1) We may expect a blast from Peking if we in Hong Kong refuse to let them come and Peking wants them to come.

51. FO371/84468, reported in telegram from the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 3 June 1950.

52. FO371/84468, telegram from the British secretary of state for the Colonies to the governor of Hong Kong, dated 3 June 1950.

(2) This would be most desirable.

(3) Two weeks.

(4) Endorsement limiting stay to two weeks should be put on passport or affidavit (paragraph 2 of your telegram No. 877) or otherwise conveyed in writing to members of Mission.

(5) See first sentence of this telegram.

(6) Members of Mission should be treated in all respects as private persons and so informed in writing before they leave India. They should also be instructed that on no account should they communicate with press. Representatives of Central Peoples' Government should also be treated as private individuals.[53]

The Tibetans were unaware of these events and on 3 June again told the deputy high commissioner that the members had an important appointment in Hong Kong with someone from China on 6 June. Shakabpa emphasized again that the mission's orders were to proceed with all speed to Hong Kong and that therefore he could not wait for the Chinese ambassador to arrive in India. Shakabpa said he feared that British refusal to grant traveling permission to this critical mission might be interpreted in Tibet as a desertion of Tibet by India and Britain, and in Peking as a deliberate attempt to prevent Tibetans from contacting Chinese authorities. The deputy high commissioner reiterated that the visas were not legal and that if the two members of the mission tried to leave on the fourth they would be stopped.[54]

The Tibetans, unconvinced, sent two members to the airport on 4 June. They checked their luggage and had no problem being assigned seats, but when they went through passport control they were told their visas were not in order and were prevented from boarding the airplane.[55]

The Tibetan delegation now went to New Delhi to try to convince the British high commissioner and the Indian government to change their policy. In Delhi they met with the Indian foreign secretary, K. P. S. Menon, who explained that Hong Kong was under the juris-

53. FO371/84468, telegram from the governor of Hong Kong to the secretary of state for the Colonies in London, dated 4 June 1950.

54. FO371/84468, telegram from the deputy high commissioner in Calcutta to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 4 June 1950.

55. J. Taring, interview; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 413; Shakabpa, interview.

diction of Britain, which had not instructed the Indian government to allow the mission to leave for Hong Kong.[56] The Tibetans then sought an explanation from Sir Archibald Nye, the British high commissioner in New Delhi. His account of his meeting with the Tibetans on 7 June deserves to be quoted at length:

> I received joint leaders of Tibetan Mission this afternoon and explained to them that it was the view of the United Kingdom Government that it was more desirable for their negotiations to take place in India than in Hong Kong for the following reasons:
>
> (I) The imminent arrival of the new Chinese representative in India.
>
> (II) The poor state of British relations with the Chinese Peoples Government. .
>
> (III) Good relations between India and China make Delhi a more suitable place,
>
> (IV) Peking evidently did not wish to [?treat] with Tibetan Mission on equal terms,
>
> I quoted from Peking broadcast of 20th January . . . and handed them a copy. Shagabpa took note of the United Kingdom proposal that negotiations should take place in India rather than in Hong Kong and promised to refer it to Lhasa.
>
> 2. I then requested clarification of the status of the Chinese "guide" who was said to be awaiting the Mission in Hong Kong. Shagabpa explained that this person had no authority to negotiate and that if the Mission went to Hong Kong he understood that Peking would send a fully accredited negotiator there. He confirmed that Mission had no instructions to proceed beyond Hong Kong without referring to Lhasa. I then said that if the Tibetan Government agreed to negotiations in Delhi no problem would arise but if they insisted on the Mission proceeding to Hong Kong I would have to refer to London for instructions. I stressed that no British official responsibility for accommodation in Hong Kong could be taken and that if visas were granted they would only be valid for a limited period. I added that there was the further technical difficulty that we did not recognise Tibetan passports and that were visas for Hong Kong to be approved Mission would have to travel on affidavits of identity. This would amount to the same thing.
>
> 3. Shagabpa explained at length the visa difficulties and delays which the Mission had incurred since their arrival in India on March 6th. I

56. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 413–14.

expressed my sympathy but suggested it would have been wiser for them to have approached me in the first place.

4. Shagabpa then said that if the Tibetan Government had agreed to accept a Chinese Government's offer of complete autonomy within the Chinese Peoples Republic they would have had no need to approach us for permission to negotiate in Hong Kong. But the Tibetan Government appreciated that the Mission would lose its freedom of action if it went to Peking and had in consequence hoped for the support of the British Government by permitting negotiations to take place on British territory. He confirmed that the Tibetan Government were not ready to accept the Chinese offer of autonomy but stressed that the reported advance of Chinese forces into Eastern Tibet made it urgent to contact the Chinese.

5. Shagabpa then took up the point of our non-recognition of Tibetan passports. He explained that when he had been on the Trade Mission to United Kingdom and United States of America in 1948 the same difficulty had arisen at New York on his return journey and that after reference to London, visas had been granted on Tibetan passports. He stressed that if Mission were now to travel to Hong Kong with affidavits of identity this would inevitably come to the ears of the Chinese who would deduce that United Kingdom Government do not recognise full Tibetan independence and consider Tibet to be under Chinese suzerainty. It is evident that Mission feels strongly on this point and in view of precedents already established I recommend that in the event of their traveling to Hong Kong we should recognise Tibetan passports and approve visas on them.

6. It was agreed that Mission would refer to Lhasa for consideration my proposal in paragraph 1 above while I would report this interview to you and obtain your views as soon as possible whether they might be permitted to travel to Hong Kong if the reply from Lhasa regarding negotiations in India was unfavourable and Tibetan Government insisted on their taking place in Hong Kong.

7. Mission further asked that I should telegraph to Lhasa to explain that the delay they had suffered in India was not their fault. I am doing so through the Government of India adding that I have explained to the Mission the reasons why it is preferable that negotiations should be carried out in India.[57]

57. FO371/84468, reported in telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 7 June 1950.

On the same day, the British Embassy in Peking replied to the British Foreign Office that he saw no objection to granting the Tibetan mission visas for Hong Kong.[58] A lively debate then took place concerning whether they should be transit visas; how long to permit the Tibetans to stay in Hong Kong; what to do if they had not left by the time their visas expired; whether they should be asked in writing not to contact the press; whether their passports should be accepted; and whether they should be considered merely as private citizens. On 14 June, the British high commissioner in Delhi was informed that if Lhasa persisted in ordering their mission to Hong Kong, the Indian government might issue transit visas for fourteen days but only on *affidavits of identity,* not on Tibetan passports. Furthermore, the Tibetans were to be treated as private citizens and would not be granted use of any official facilities.[59]

The Indian government did not want to be involved in procuring "affidavits" from the Tibetans. They told the U.K. high commissioner that "they consider that when the Tibetan (?omission) are at least facing up to fact that their salvation depends upon their own efforts and not some outside shield, it is important that they should not lose heart and succumb to Chinese cajolery from a sense of isolation, from which they are at present suffering." The British high commissioner also opposed London's decision, responding that he could not explain this policy to the Indians because London had never informed him of their reasons, legal or otherwise, for it. Nye requested clarification, while strongly urging reconsideration.[60] London responded as follows:

> Our reluctance to recognise Tibetan passports arises from our long established acceptance of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. We did not wish to give the Tibetans or the Chinese the impression that we were prepared to underwrite Tibetan independence. Shagapba's remarks in paragraph 5 of your telegram no. 1616 [see above, 7 June 1950] indicate that he regards the acceptance of Tibetan passports as implying our recognition

58. FO371/84468, telegram from British Embassy in Peking to the Foreign Office in London, dated 7th June, 1950.

59. FO371/84468, telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 14 June 1950.

60. FO371/84469, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 17 June 1950.

> of Tibetan independence. We have never regarded Tibet as independent, and do not now do so. We would also wish to avoid provoking China unnecessarily over this issue.[61]

But they did another turnabout and said they would accept Tibetan passports after all: "In view of the attitude of the Government of India as reported by you, however, we are prepared to waive our objections and agree to the acceptance of Tibetan passports in this case. It should be made clear to the Tibetans that this action merely implies recognition of the passports as valid travel documents and no more."[62]

This decision, of course, was to be conveyed to the Tibetans only if the Tibetan government in Lhasa continued to *insist* on negotiating in Hong Kong. But by now the Tibetans believed they had no hope of being allowed to go to Hong Kong. On 17 June they informed the U.K. high commissioner that the Tibetan government had agreed to hold the talks in Delhi. They said they were contacting Peking to ascertain whether the Chinese would agree to this and had already contacted the Indian government asking them to provide facilities for such a meeting.[63] Then Shakabpa and Nye had a revealing conversation in which Shakabpa asked Nye "off the record" if Britain would help Tibet if all negotiations failed and China invaded Tibet.[64] As reported by Nye, the conversation ran:

> 3. Shagabpa said that the Tibetan Government would do their best to secure agreement to talks in Delhi, having been impressed by recommendations of United Kingdom and Indian Governments and similar advice from the United States Ambassador in Delhi. But if Chinese reply was unfavourable the Mission would have to either go to Hong Kong or Peking. There would be complications about going to Peking since Mission would be asked to travel on Chinese passports.
>
> 4. He [Shakabpa] then embarked on historical review to effect that decision to send a Mission to negotiate with Chinese was taken only after

61. FO371/85567, telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 22 June 1950.

62. Ibid.

63. FO371/84469, report of conversation with Shakabpa in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 17 June 1950.

64. USFR, 611.93B/6–1850, telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the United States secretary of state, dated 18 June 1950.

United Kingdom and United States Governments had refused to accept Tibetan Missions. This had greatly discouraged Tibet who had at first been stout-hearted. But he again said that Tibet was not prepared to agree to basis of settlement proposed by Peking radio.

5. Shagabpa asked on a personal basis what in my view would happen to Tibet if she failed to reach agreement with China. I replied that only possible official answer was that I did not know. But my personal view was that there were four possible alternatives:

(i) China might invade Tibet militarily to impose their regime;

(ii) the Chinese might be unwilling to spare necessary forces and be deterred by geographical difficulties and prospect of popular reaction in Tibet. They might therefore try to subvert the Tibetan regime from within by infiltration and disaffection;

(iii) they could try to induce Tibet to agree to their terms by diplomatic means with threats or plausible promises;

(iv) if diplomatic pressure failed they might decide to leave Tibet alone on account of their many preoccupations.

I said that my personal guess was that Chinese would probably try to secure their ends by (iii) and if that failed would adopt course (ii).

6. Shagabpa said that if Chinese took military action Tibet could not make effective resistance alone. Would eventually be defeated unless outside assistance could be given. *Would United Kingdom help?*

7. I replied that speaking personally I saw no, repeat no, prospect of United Kingdom military help in such circumstance. Apart from many claims on United Kingdom there would be physical difficulties in sending assistance since there was no direct access to Tibet. I could not hold out any hope of assistance from outside. But I urged them not to underestimate effectiveness of resistance that Tibetan people could offer by guerrilla tactics.[65]

On 18 June the Tibetan mission leaders left New Delhi for Calcutta and then Kalimpong to wait for word from Peking as to whether talks in Delhi were acceptable and, if so, for the Chinese ambassador's arrival in India. In the week and a half they stayed in New Delhi, they also initiated important talks with the United States.

65. FO371/84469, report of conversation with Shakabpa in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 17 June 1950 (emphasis added).

THE UNITED STATES ENTERS THE PICTURE

The fall of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists had increased U.S. interest in Tibet and the Tibetan question but did not produce an immediate change in policy. As was seen above, the State Department did not welcome the Tibetan aid mission to the United States and discouraged the Tibet government from trying to join the United Nations. The increasing U.S. interest in Tibet did, however, result in the United States asking Britain on 1 March 1950 for information on the nature and magnitude of the military aid the Indian government was giving Tibet. On 7 March the British high commissioner passed on this information to L. Henderson, the United States ambassador in India, whose report to the State Department succinctly set out the British and Indian views regarding military aid, in particular, the Indian policy of providing no military aid that could appear specifically aimed at *helping Tibet fight against China:*

> 1. Tibetan Government has asked and GOI agreed supply:
> 38 2-inch mortars
> 63 3-inch mortars
> 150 Bren guns
> 14,000 2-inch mortar bombs
> 14,000 3-inch mortar bombs
> 1,000,000 rounds .303 ammunition
>
> Ammunition is quantity estimated to be required for one brigade group in action for six months. One complication, however, is that animal transport is only practical means of delivery and foregoing quantity is equivalent to 7,000 mule loads. As insufficient mules available, some or all of 3-inch mortars and ammunition therefore, may not leave India.
>
> 2. Foregoing is material increase over small amount provided in past. However, GOI prefers regard this and any future reasonable requests from Tibet as merely continuation routine practice of meeting Tibetan requirements small arms and not as something in nature of military program directed at Chinese Communists.
>
> 3. British have no definite information as to what steps GOI have taken reference training Tibetan military units. They have suggested GOI send demolition experts to Tibet but GOI reactions negative as such action might have appeared as part of plan to oppose Chinese Communists. .
>
> British doubt Tibet has any real military plan for resisting organized

> Communist incursion as Tibetan Army Commanders know virtually nothing of tactics modern warfare. British regard dispatch of military assistance more in nature measure raise Tibetan morale and assist in combatting infiltration and subversion which they regard as greatest present danger than as measure which could conceivably halt full-scale invasion. They point out, however, that if 7,000 mule loads cannot be delivered Tibet from India in one season it would also be difficult for Chinese mount sizeable invasion.
>
> [U.S.] Embassy doubts Tibet in position make use of members[?] military assistance of types than outlined above until Tibetans have some more advanced military training. Simple demolition equipment and supplies would probably be practicable and useful if GOI permitted transit through India and training in use thereof could be arranged. GOI reaction to suggestion US collaborate with India in meeting Tibetan needs likely be somewhat unfavorable because (1) GOI itself providing what Tibetans want and can use (2) political undesirability from GOI viewpoint in collaborating with US in apparent joint program directed against Chinese Communists and (3) US has been unable meet GOI'S own requests for US military assistance such as spare tank parts.[66]

Increasing U.S. interest in assisting Tibet was, therefore, hindered from the start by the strong suspicion that India would not cooperate with the United States. From Tibet's perspective, however, Britain and India's lack of strong support for Tibet made the anti-Communist United States an attractive option. When the Shakabpa mission first reached Calcutta in March 1950, they informally notified the U.S. consul in Calcutta that Tibet was interested in the possibility of buying arms and ammunition, which would be held in caches in Sikkim, Nepal, and Bhutan so that in the event of an invasion Tibet would have supplies readily available. They also were interested in the possibility of a U.S. trade representative or, preferably, a cultural representative, who would arrange for exchanges of books and scholarships and would provide an unofficial but useful link between the two governments.[67] In mid-April the U.S. State Department heard that the Shakabpa mission

66. USFR, 793B.00/3–850, telegram from the United States ambassador in India (Henderson) to the United States secretary of state, dated 8 March 1950.

67. USFR, 793B.00/4–2050, report dated 20 April of conversation of American consul-general in Calcutta with a "controlled American source," enclosed in a telegram from the United States Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 27 March 1950.

was so discouraged by their attempts to work with the Western democracies that they were considering going to Moscow.[68] These events persuaded the U.S. secretary of state, Dean Acheson, to suggest that the U.S. ambassador to India informally convey to Tibet America's interest in her situation. He wrote to Henderson in India:

> DEPT WLD not wish Tibetans misinterpret our failure accede their requests as disinterest or lack sympathy their predicament or difficulties. As you aware a primary consideration has been our belief active or overt interest non-Communist countries Tibet at this time WLD tend hasten or provoke CHI Communist action against area whereas, in absence such action, cost full-scale COMMIE MIL expedition against Tibet in face geographic and logistic difficulties might lead indefinite delay COMMIE MIL action, particularly, if Tibetan MIL capacity quietly strengthened. Owing to its geographic location and close relationship Tibet, India in best position carry out measures this nature; hence DEPT following with interest reports GOI making some effort supply MIL material Tibetans. DEPT hope you will feel free whenever suitable opportunities arise convey Tibetans on personal informal basis as much foregoing as you consider desirable.[69]

The Tibetan mission leaders called on the U.S. ambassador in Delhi 9 June, and he explained, as instructed, the reasons for the U.S. negative response to the mission to America. He emphasized that this did not mean the United States was unsympathetic to Tibet or disinterested in her plight. Shakabpa again spoke of Tibet's precarious military situation and said many expected a Chinese invasion if the negotiations failed. He said, however, that Tibet felt confident they could rely on American friendship, and he hinted that they might approach the United States again.[70]

On 16 June the Tibetan mission again called on Henderson, telling him that they had heard a report that the U.S. government would not

68. This information came from the law firm the Tibetans had used during their 1948 visit to the United States (USFR, 793B.00/4–1950, report on information from the Tibetan mission's law firm in the United States, cited in a telegram from the U.S. State Department to the United States Embassy in India, dated 19 April 1950).

69. Ibid.

70. USFR, 793B.00/6–950, report of meeting with Tibetan mission leaders, cited in a telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 9 June 1950.

accept an extension of Chinese Communist control over Tibet. Henderson denied any knowledge of such a statement by the United States and said it was unlikely to have been made, since such a remark could provoke Chinese Communist aggressive action. Shakabpa then directly asked what aid the United States would provide if China invaded Tibet. Henderson responded in a manner that, though negative, left the door open for U.S. aid. The ambassador reported this conversation as follows:

> In response Shakabpa's direct question re possibility US aid in event invasion we [the ambassador] stated we could not in fairness encourage Tibetans to believe that US Government would consider it feasible to offer such aid. On other hand we were without instructions to state categorically that US would do nothing whatever in such eventuality. We added US was extending aid to countries threatened by Communist aggression in certain cases where there appeared a reasonable prospect that such aid might be effective. Among considerations involved in any decision which might be made re aid to Tibet presumably would be: (1) likelihood that aid given would enable Tibetans successfully to resist Communists; (2) feasibility of transporting military equipment and supplies over difficult routes to Tibet and attitude of GOI through whose territories supplies would presumably have to pass; (3) probable effect of such move upon Chinese Communists—would they accept such a move as challenge which must be answered by accelerating or increasing scale of aggressive action. We stressed conversation was entirely personal and unofficial.[71]

At about the same time the U.S. State Department asked the British Embassy in Washington whether they felt effective assistance to Tibet by Western powers could enable Tibet to withstand a Chinese military invasion. On 13 June the State Department also gave the British Embassy an informal statement of their views on steps that might be taken to encourage and support Tibetan resistance to Chinese control, asking Britain to reciprocate in a similar informal statement. The U.S. communiqué said:

71. USFR, 611.93B/6–1850, report of meeting with Tibetan mission, in a telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 18 June 1950.

Informal Outline of Present Thinking Respecting Tibet

Owing to geographic location and to cultural, trade and religious relationships, Tibet under Chinese Communist control might offer a base for the extension of Communist penetration and subversive activities into Nepal and Bhutan and, eventually, India.

The Tibetan regime at Lhasa has announced its intention to resist the extension of Communist control over Tibet and has informally suggested that it send missions to the United States to seek American aid and to further the entry of Tibet into the United Nations. The United States Government has discouraged these moves, which would align Tibet openly with the non-Communist states and bring into immediate question Chinese suzerainty over the area, on the grounds that they might provoke or hasten counter-action by the Chinese Communists and thereby jeopardize Tibet's present autonomy.

It is probable that the Chinese Communists have the military strength to capture Tibet. However, the terrain through which a military force attacking Tibet from China would pass lends itself to guerrilla resistance and confronts the attacking force with major logistic problems. Comparatively little assistance in the form of specialized military instruction and supplies might stiffen Tibetan resistance and make a Chinese Communist military expedition so costly that it would not be undertaken, particularly in the absence of a manifestation by the Western States of extraordinary interest in Tibet or an attempt to alter its international status.

It would, however, appear desirable covertly to supply to the Tibetans limited amounts of specialized military assistance and quietly to encourage Tibetan will to resist Communist control. Owing to its geographic position and special trade and other relationships with Tibet, India is perhaps the only country which could undertake this task. Furthermore, Indian interests are most immediately and directly concerned. The Government of India is believed to have taken an increasing interest in this problem and is understood to be providing the Tibetans with some military supplies, although the amount is not known.

By reason of its traditional interest in Tibet and its special relationship with India, the British Government obviously is in a better position than is the United States Government to appraise Tibetan needs, to ascertain the extent of Indian help and to exert influence upon the Government of India to assume responsibility for any necessary action respecting Tibet. In the opinion of the United States Government, however, it would be undesirable, because of Indian sensibilities, for British representatives to

> refer to any exchanges of views between the British and United States Governments regarding Tibet in discussions which they may have with the Government of India.[72]

The British Embassy in Washington referred this to the Foreign Office in London, who responded negatively almost at once:

> (ii) Tibet's inaccessibility makes it impracticable for us to do anything to stiffen its resistance to the Chinese. We must also assume that it would be incapable of effective resistance to a Chinese attack.
>
> (iii) Our past interest in Tibet rose from its proximity to India. Those interests have now devolved on the Government of India, and as you are aware we no longer have a representative in Lhasa. The Government of India have made it plain that there is no question of India giving Tibet direct military support. . . .
>
> 2. We therefore consider that any attempt to intervene in Tibet would be impracticable and unwise. We have no interest in the area sufficiently strong to justify the certain risks involved in our embroiling ourselves with the Chinese on this question, and we must not on any account get out of step with India over it. We consider also that we should devote no more attention than is necessary to Tibet in our publicity at this stage. A Tibetan collapse would have a more serious effect on morale in neighbouring countries if the issue had been played-up in advance.[73]

The United States nevertheless persisted. In July 1950 the State Department and other unnamed "interested agencies" (obviously, the CIA) discussed the advisability of approaching the Tibetan mission in Kalimpong with a promise of secret U.S. aid, in the hope of encouraging them to resist Chinese Communist encroachments. They asked the U.S. ambassador in India whether the outbreak of the Korean War might have made the Indian government more amenable to U.S. covert aid to Tibet and whether the best plan might not be to have the Tibet-

72. USFR, 793B.00/6–1650, communiqué enclosed with U.S. State Department memorandum of conversation, dated 16 June 1950.

73. FO371/84469, telegram from British Foreign Office to British Embassy in America, dated 15th June, 1950.

ans themselves ask India for permission to secure arms from abroad.[74] Ambassador Henderson responded that because of India's "relations with and concern about" China, he did not see any likelihood of a change in India's attitude. He said the "GOI would object to any initiative by another power, particularly the U.S., to extend military aid to Tibet." But he suggested that:

> 3. On the other hand, we believe GOI might find it difficult to refuse if Tibetans themselves should request GOI . . . to allow them to procure in India or abroad additional supplies and equipment they may require to reinforce Tibet's defense. GOI might well have reservations on amounts of such "purchases" but might be prepared to agree to some negotiated figure if convinced Tibetans were ready to take the risks of resistance and could defend country with effectiveness.[75]

The ambassador went on to say that he favored approaching the Tibetans soon to inform them of the U.S. agreement in principle to assist Tibet and then to discuss with them their specific needs and how best to move equipment to Tibet.[76]

A week later, the State Department agreed that the Tibetans should be contacted, instructing Henderson:

> Dept now in position give assurance Tibetans re US aid. Details will be forwarded separate msg. View current state US-Indian relations Dept believes action designed obtain GOI cooperation such a project shld be left to Tibetans. Dept believes procedure shld be as follows: In response Tibetan approach you inform them that US ready to assist procurement and financing. Tibetans then approach GOI opening with request for more Indian aid. GOI will presumably say Tibet now getting all aid India can give and all aid Tibet can properly use. Tibetans then wld ask whether GOI wld agree facilitate delivery through India of material procured abroad. If GOI answer an unqualified negative matter ends. If positive you wld then raise matter with GOI explaining Tibetan approach to

74. USFR, 693.93B/7–1150, telegram from the State Department to the U.S. ambassador in India, dated 11 July. The original of this telegram is not available; this summary derives from a footnote in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1950, volume 6, 376.

75. USFR, 793B.00/7–1550, telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 15 July 1950.

76. Ibid.

you and willingness US help Tibetans and then enter into examination procedures of delivery.

2. Dept believes it wld be undesirable present stage ask Tibetans for particulars re specific needs. In ur talk with Tibet Del it might be desirable restate necessity GOI cooperation and discuss tactics. Tibetans must realize importance this stage of not informing GOI of US interest, although GOI may be aware your contact with Tibetans and may surmise US interest when Tibetans approach GOI. Dept agrees advantage discussing matter with Tibetans before they enter into conversations with reps Peking Govt in New Delhi.[77]

The United States informed the British Embassy of the American plan on 24 July; they received a totally negative response. Hubert Graves, counsellor in the British Embassy in Washington, told the State Department on 28 July "that the British Government was adopting a very passive attitude toward Tibet in favor of India which had now assumed the role of the most active power."[78]

Nevertheless, on 4 August the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta met with Shakabpa and indicated the willingness of the United States to support Tibet with military equipment. The exchange is very revealing, because the Tibetans immediately perceived the flaw in the offer and pressed for clarification on whether the United States would help in the case of a Chinese invasion. The Tibetans, as in the past, were desperately looking for someone to "see them through to the end," as they had put it to the British political officer in Sikkim, Basil Gould, in 1944. The American account of this important meeting stated:

Conversation opened with allusion to Shakabpa's call at Embassy New Delhi June 16, and to his inquiry as to whether US Government would render assistance to Tibet in event Chinese Communist military invasion. Steere outlined my reply at that time to his inquiry . . . recalling particularly my remarks re difficulties of such aid and re fact that US had given aid to certain countries which were resisting Communist subversion and aggression. He said that Shakabpa's inquiry had been reported to Washington and that reply had now been received. He was authorized to state

77. USFR, 793B.00/7–2250, telegram from the U.S. secretary of state to the United States ambassador in India, dated 22 July 1950.

78. USFR, 793B.00/7–2850, U.S. State Department memorandum of conversation, dated 28 July 1950.

that if Tibet intended to resist Communist aggression and needed help US Government was prepared to assist in procuring material and would finance such aid. He added that US considered it important that prompt steps be taken now as it would be extremely difficult make aid available in time if Tibet were to wait until invasion had started.

3. *Shakabpa expressed gratification at US reply, and inquired whether it meant that US in event Chinese Communist invasion would send troops and planes to Tibet's aid.* Steere answered the US reply pertained to war materials and finance, and explained that US was not at war with Chinese Communists, did not have enough troops to meet its own needs, and besides, it seemed to us that Tibet, with advantages of terrain it enjoyed, needed arms more than it did men.

4. Shakabpa said Tibet authorities felt able deal with Communist subversion (through Panchen Lama) but not with Chinese Communist invasion in force unless they had foreign help. Said Tibet was worried about attitude of GOI, intimating they feared India might come to some understanding with Chinese Communists at Tibet's expense. . . .

5. Steere then outlined procedure laid down by Department, stressing and repeating to assure no misunderstanding, namely, that Tibet should first ask GOI for additional aid and if refused then ask GOI friendly cooperation by permitting passage of aid it wanted to secure abroad. He emphasized essentiality Indian cooperation for effective assistance be delivered Tibet, and necessity Tibet make approach GOI without any indication of US assurance of aid. Shakabpa expressed understanding of position. Agreed to inform Lhasa and said that about fifteen days would be needed for him to receive reply.

6. Re Khan [*sic;* Kham] cooperation: Shakabpa said that it could be counted upon if there was assurance foreign aid. By "foreign aid" we believed Tibetans had in mind assurances of aid from GOI, UK and US, although they were reluctant to specify. Impression was gained that they might welcome more foreign technicians and advisers, possibly as an accretion to Indian military mission at Gyangtse.

7. . . . Linn had already asked Tibetans for detailed list needs in connection with request directed to him in June. Tibetans referred his request and said still awaiting answer. Shakabpa could say nothing definite.

8. Tibet delegate showed much interest in possibility of air lift to Tibet, and said authorities could prepare landing fields at Lhasa, Gartok and Chumdo [*sic:* Chamdo]. They inquired whether *planes could not take*

> *off from Dacca and Rawalpindi (Pakistan), Burma or some other points if India not cooperative.* They were not encouraged in these ideas.
>
> 9. Re Communist China: Shakabpa said Tibet National Assembly had decided Tibet in no circumstances would agree Chinese suzerainty. Said Tibet tactics all along had been to play for time. That was why they had wanted to go to Hong Kong. . . . They were now waiting for Chinese Communist Ambassador to arrive India and would endeavor contact him.[79]

Five days after this, the United States once more changed its mind and this time informed the Indian government of U.S. willingness to help Tibet with arms and munitions if the Tibetan government could arrange for transit of such equipment across neighboring countries, that is to say, India. They also notified the Tibetan mission, then in Calcutta, that the Indian government had been informed. [80]

TIBETAN AND CHINESE DISCUSSIONS BEGIN

By the middle of August 1950, the Tibetans and the Chinese had made arrangements to meet in Delhi when the new Chinese ambassador to India arrived there in early September.[81] The Tibetan mission returned to New Delhi on 4 September. On 5 September they met with K. P. S. Menon of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, who told them that the Indian government had instructed their ambassador in China, Sardat Panikkar, to protest news reports that the Chinese had

79. USFR, 693.93B/8–750, telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 7 August 1950 (emphasis added).

80. USFR, 611.93B/8–1450, report of conversation with G. S. Bajpai, secretary-general of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, in a telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 14 August 1950; USFR, 793B.00/8–1850, telegram from the U.S. secretary of state to the United States ambassador in India, dated 18 August 1950.

81. The Chinese had told the new Indian ambassador in Peking that China wanted to settle its problems with Tibet without resort to force and that China had agreed to hold preliminary conversations with the Tibetan mission in India and then final discussions in Peking. (USFR, 793B.00/8–2350, report of conversation with the Indian foreign secretary in which the comments of the Indian ambassador in Chna were conveyed, cited in a telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 23 August 1950.)

moved about 20,000 troops into Eastern Tibet. He told them that the Chinese deputy ambassador had arrived in Delhi and suggested that they meet with him. The Tibetan mission leaders thanked Menon for India's support and requested that the Indian government participate in the negotiations as they had when under British rule. They argued that Tibet's stability was a matter of importance to India and that India's presence would help both Tibet and India. The Tibetans also requested a meeting with Prime Minister Nehru to obtain his advice before they saw the Chinese Ambassador.[82]

On 6 September the Tibetans met with the Chinese chargé d'affaires, Shen Chien. They said they were ready to begin negotiations as soon as the ambassador arrived and that in the meantime Peking should refrain from causing any trouble in Kham. Shen gave them a small pamphlet in Chinese that described China's view of future Sino-Tibetan relations. It mentioned that:

> China's soldiers will go to Tibet to liberate it but when they reach Tibet they will not change anything in Tibetan culture and religion. The present Tibetan army will come under China and will be called "Border Security Guards." All their weapons, military supplies, etc., will be paid by the Central Government. Those Tibetans who in the past have had friendly relations with the Kuomintang, the British and the Americans will not be harmed if they do not try to obstruct or block the Communist Party.[83]

Shen also appeared to change the Chinese position by saying that all talks would have to take place in China and that the Delhi meetings were simply a formal introduction.[84]

On 8 September the Tibetans met with Prime Minister Nehru for more than two hours. The Tibetans told Nehru they would not go to

82. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 415–16.
83. Ibid.: 416.
84. FO371/84469, report of conversation with the Indian foreign secretary, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 12 September 1950. The U.S. ambassador reported a conversation with Shakabpa on 9 September: "Re forthcoming negotiations Shakabpa stated delegation had called briefly on Chinese Chargé who had insisted that any conversations concerning future status should take place in China." (USFR, 793.00/9–1050, report of conversation with Shakabpa, cited in a telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the United States secretary of state, dated 10 September 1950.)

Peking unless the Chinese guaranteed Tibetan independence in advance. Moreover, they did not trust the Chinese and reiterated their request that India agree to mediate between Tibet and China.[85] Nehru responded bluntly:

> The Government of India will continue the policy of the British period in considering Tibet outwardly a part of China but internally independent. We will request the Chinese not to send their troops into Tibet, but if the Tibetan representatives say that Tibet is completely independent, it will be very difficult to reach an agreement. And as to India acting as a witness to any agreement, that is talk of thirty years ago and is not acceptable in this day and age.[86]

The Tibetans replied:

> Because Tibet is independent please do not talk about "internal autonomy" under China. If Tibet is ruined this will result in great danger for the other countries of East Asia and in particular to India. Now India has only about 75 soldiers protecting the trade marts in Tibet, but in the future, if India and China share a border in Tibet then you will have to maintain permanently many hundreds of thousands of troops there and this will be a great hardship for India. So please do not only think about the current friendly relations between India and China but think about the long term future.[87]

Nehru was a bit irritated by this and said sharply to the Tibetans that it was not enough to speak about Tibetan independence: such status had to be proved according to the law. To this the Tibetans answered:

> In 1914 at the time of the Simla Convention, Tibet and Britain made a separate treaty which said that the suzerainty of China over Tibet

85. FO371/84469, report of conversation with the Indian foreign secretary, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 12 September 1950; USFR, 693.93B/9–1950, report of conversation with G. S. Bajpai regarding the Tibetan mission's meeting with Nehru, cited in a telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the United States secretary of state, dated 19 September 1950; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 417–18.

86. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 417–18. Shakabpa wrote "internally independent" but Nehru *certainly only said* "internally autonomous." Nehru had articulated this position at a press conference in London in November 1949, where he said that India had always recognized Chinese suzerainty over Tibet but considered Tibet to be an autonomous unit (Dutt 1977: 80).

87. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 417–18.

> is wiped out and until now we have been acting as an independent country.[88]

Nehru immediately called the Indian Ministry of External Affairs to ask whether there was such a separate treaty,[89] and then he replied, showing some anger:

> There is no separate treaty like this and China never accepted the Simla Convention. The Chinese believe that Tibet is a part of China. Tibet thinks that because China didn't accept Simla, it is independent but at that time Tibet did not make any clear decisions. That was a mistake. And later when you had the time and the opportunity to do something [about "independence"] you did nothing and this was a mistake. During this period China has been very clever and have proclaimed widely in the international community that Tibet is a part of China. Now you, the representatives, have to be very careful [with what you say and claim] when you begin your talks with the Chinese.[90]

After the meeting with Nehru the Tibetans visited the British and the U.S. representatives. F. Roberts, the British acting high commissioner, reported that when he met the Tibetans on 8 September they seemed despondent about Tibet's future. They asked Roberts about the possbility of British assistance and advice and received in return the by then standard litany that British "responsibilities in relation to Tibet had in the main now passed to the Government of India."[91] On the following day the Tibetans met with Ambassador Henderson and informed him that a separate mission was being sent from Lhasa to discuss the U.S. offer of military assistance. Henderson's report of Shakabpa's comments gives some insight into the Tibetan position at this time:

> 2. Shakabpa stated that Tibetan Government has taken firm decision to meet any Communist Chinese incursion with force. He said that his

88. Ibid. The Tibetans appear to have meant the Anglo-Tibetan Declaration of 3 July 1914 (see Appendix C, no. 2).

89. Gelek ([Rimpoche], interview) indicated that Shakabpa and J. Taring had informed him of Nehru's response.

90. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 417–18.

91. FO371/84469, report of conversation with the Tibetan mission, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 8 September 1950.

> government wished him to express its deep appreciation of US offer of military assistance. As had been suggested, the Tibetan Government would approach the GOI to solicit its cooperation. A separate mission comprising Surkhang Depon and Khencung Lobsang Tsewang had been dispatched from Lhasa and would arrive in New Delhi in a few days. To allay suspicion this mission had been designated as trade mission, but its real purpose was to bring full instructions from Lhasa Government and to conduct conversations re additional military aid with GOI. Detailed information re types and quantities of additional military equipment desired would presumably be supplied by new mission. As yet this question had not been raised with GOI by Shakabpa.
>
> 7. In response to our questions concerning demands which Peiping Government has made upon Tibet, Shakabpa said no formal demands had been received; that information concerning intention of Communist China Government to "liberate" Tibet had been received chiefly from radio broadcasts and through private channels. He said these announcements included promises of non-interference with local administration and religion, but was extremely vague and doubtful as to scope of local autonomy which he believed Peiping Government really intends. As regards the aims of the Tibetan Government in the forthcoming negotiations, he was at first reluctant to make positive statement, but finally stated that what Tibet wanted was independence. It seemed obvious that (a) Tibetans fear consequences outright claim or demand for independence, i.e., that it would provoke Chinese Communists and perhaps alienate GOI, but (b) they want to convey impression of their firm intention to achieve this goal, if necessary by fighting all perhaps in ultimate hope of preserving *status quo*.[92]

On 16 September the Tibetan mission met with the new Chinese ambassador, Yuan Chung-hsien. The Tibetans began the negotiations by reiterating their traditional position, assuring him that there was no need to liberate Tibet from imperialism since Tibet was ruled and protected by the Dalai Lama, not by any foreign power.

Ambassador Yuan responded that if there really were no foreign powers or influences in Tibet, he was very glad, but China would under no circumstances hold talks pertaining to the continuance of Tibetan

92. USFR, 793B.00/9–1050, report of conversation with the Tibetan mission, cited in a telegram from the United States ambassador in India to the United States secretary of state, dated 10 September 1950.

independence. He gave the Tibetans a pamphlet containing the Chinese government's policy for Tibet, explaining to them that of its points, three were critical:

1. Tibet must accept that it is a part of China.
2. Tibet's defense must be handled by China.
3. All political and trade matters concerning foreign countries must be conducted through China.

Yuan bluntly told the Tibetans they had to inform him whether or not they accepted these three points. If they accepted them, he said, the Chinese soldiers then stationed on the border would not attack Tibet and the liberation would be peaceful. If not, war was inevitable.

The Tibetans responded that because the discrepancy between these three points and their own orders was so great, they would have to ask Lhasa for instructions. They asked Yuan to insure that no Chinese troops would create disturbances on the border which would alter the status quo while they waited for Lhasa's reply.[93] A former head of Indian Intelligence has written that the Chinese also told the Tibetans it was very important that they reach Peking for negotiations by the end of September.[94]

The next day the Tibetan delegation sent a telegram (and a detailed letter) to the Kashag informing them of their meetings with the Indians and the Chinese ambassador and advising them not to insist on full independence but, rather, to make a number of basic concessions that might appease the Chinese. They suggested that the Tibetan government accept Yuan's first point, that Tibet was a part of China, but that they accept it in name only. On the second point, they suggested responding to Yuan that since there was no danger of war from Nepal or India, the question of the military defense of Tibet was not so important that it had to be handled by China; Tibet would use its own troops to look after its security but would ask for assistance from China if a major threat occurred. On the third point, the Tibetan mission in Delhi advised the Kashag to answer that Tibet should be allowed to carry out

93. This account of the meeting derives from Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 418–19.
94. Mullik 1971: 66.

trade and cultural discussions with Nepal and India (but, implicitly, not with other countries). The Tibetan mission also asked for approval to go to Peking for further negotiations, feeling that without such an attempt at direct negotiations the Chinese would invade Tibet.[95]

The arrival of the proposal from the mission in Delhi sent the Tibetan government into a whirl. Not only did they object to conceding these points, but many Tibetan leaders, as was seen earlier, wanted China to return control over large expanses of territory in Kham. Shakabpa's strong request urging acceptance that Tibet was a part of China and relinquishing independent foreign relations except with India and Nepal was more than they could consider. Nine days later, on 28 September, the Kashag replied to Shakabpa that because the consequences of the decision would have a major effect on the future of Tibet, it would require a great deal of thought; the delegation should stall the Chinese until a decision could be reached in Lhasa.[96]

During this period the Chinese, growing impatient, had asked the Tibetans several times whether they had received an answer from Lhasa. The Tibetans now immediately went to the Chinese and told them that Lhasa was waiting to receive Shakabpa's detailed letter, which had gone by special horse messenger, and that they would require another two or three weeks before they would be able to respond to the Chinese proposal. The Tibetans, however, feared that they could not stall the Chinese much longer, and on the next day, the thirtieth, they again urged the Kashag to make a decision.[97]

In the meantime, the Kashag sent Rimshi Surkhang and Lobsang Tsewang to India in the guise of a trade mission to discuss military assistance with the United States and India. They arrived in New Delhi on 4 October with instructions from the U.S. Consulate in Calcutta to contact Ambassador Henderson through the Shakabpa mission.[98] First, however, they met with Nehru, who told them Tibet was making a big mistake buying arms from India, since this act might provoke a Chinese attack. Because of the sensitivity of the Sino-Tibetan negotiations the

95. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 419–21.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. USFR, 793B.00/10–2650, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 26 October 1950.

Tibetans did not ask Nehru if India would permit them to purchase weapons from a third party such as the United States, but the two officials received the clear impression that India would not help Tibet because of its desire for close relations with China.[99] The American Embassy in Delhi commented that the "Tibetans completely lost heart from attitude of government of India encountered in New Delhi."[100] Although Surkhang and Lobsang Tsewang had been sent to discuss military supplies with the United States, they postponed going to see Henderson, because the Shakabpa negotiations seemed to have arrived at a critical juncture and they did not want to risk affecting them negatively by openly dealing with the Americans.

On 4 October, the day Surkhang and Tsewang arrived in Delhi, the Kashag informed Shakabpa that a meeting of the regent, the Kashag, and the trungtsigye had decided it would be very difficult to accept the three Chinese points, for to do so meant that Tibet would lose all its political rights. The message went on to say that because China was so powerful and had so many troops, it was also difficult to respond negatively. Consequently, the mission was ordered to try to continue to stall, with the hope of delaying a Chinese attack until the Kashag could reassess the world situation, bring the issue before the assembly, and then communicate their decision.[101]

The mission was disappointed and frustrated by this delaying strategy, which not only put them in an awkward situation in Delhi but also, they felt, might push the Chinese to invade Eastern Tibet. They immediately wired Lhasa that while they realized that the decision was crucial, the time for procrastinating was over. The international situation would not improve, so they asked Lhasa to give them an immediate answer. They believed that once the Chinese attacked the border, they would be unable to continue negotiations.[102]

99. USFR, 793B.00/10–2850, conversation with the Tibetan trade mission cited in a telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. State Department, dated 28 October 1950.

100. USFR, 793B.00/10–2650, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 26 October 1950.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

The next day, unbeknownst to Lhasa or Shakabpa, the People's Liberation Army began their invasion to "liberate" Tibet.

PRELUDE TO THE BATTLE FOR CHAMDO

While these events were unfolding in India, in Kham the situation looked bad. On May Day 1950, Radio Peking again broadcast that one of the PLA's tasks for the year was to liberate Tibet, and reports were filtering into Chamdo that advance units of the PLA had reached the Upper Yangtse River area, the boundary between Chinese- and Tibetan-controlled Kham.[103]

On 22 May, Radio Peking called on the Tibetan government and people to accept the peaceful liberation of Tibet. The broadcast said that Tibet was a part of China and that Tibetans could neither stop the People's Liberation Army nor count on receiving ouside aid from Britain or America. Tibet was urged to send representatives to Peking to begin peace negotiations, which would save the Tibetan people from unnecessary losses.[104]

In July 1950, the first military contact between the two forces occurred at Dengo, a village about 100 miles northeast of Chamdo (see Map 11). Lhalu had placed one of his two wireless sets there since it was on the main route from Kanze to Jyekundo.[105] It was to destroy this wireless that the Chinese attacked. R. Ford, the British wireless operator in Chamdo, recalled the first word of the attack: "Sonam Phuntso [the wireless operator in Dengo] told me he had an urgent message as soon as he came on the air. He began to tap it out, but he did not finish. Suddenly he broke off, and telegraphed in clear: 'The Chinese are here.' Then there was silence. Dengko radio had closed down for good."[106]

A week later, one of the two radio operators who had been stationed

103. Ford 1958: 43. Hainan was no longer mentioned, since it had been taken in April 1950 (Clubb 1964: 317).
104. Sen 1960: 18.
105. Lhalu, interview.
106. Ford 1958: 49.

in Dengo arrived in Chamdo and gave the following account of the incident: "I looked out the window in the radio station . . . and there they were. Hundreds of them, pouring into the courtyard. I told Sonam Phuntso, who was on the key, but he went on tapping, and that's why he was caught. They had already got Sonam Dorje on the way in. I hid in a cupboard, and they never looked in. That night I crept out, and ran away."[107]

As soon as Ford received this news, he informed Lhalu, who "looked grave but gave no sign of alarm." Lhalu said a brief prayer and then ordered Commander Mucha, who was stationed with 500 troops near the Jyekundo border area about five days' march northwest of Chamdo, to return at once to Chamdo with his force. Lhalu also ordered scouts to ride day and night to Dengo to determine the situation there.[108]

Lhalu informed Lhasa of the attack and asked for more wireless equipment and operators. The importance of communications was highlighted by this incident: had there been no wireless in Dengo, the earliest a message could have reached Chamdo was two days later, and then only if the rider went day and night. Lhalu now wanted to reestablish a radio station in Dengo and set up additional ones in Riwoche, Gangto Druga, and even Markham, if a fourth set could be obtained from Lhasa.[109]

Ten days later, Commander Mucha arrived in Chamdo. He was about forty-five and was a swashbuckling leader. He was liked and respected by his troops, who were unusually well-disciplined and smart-looking for a Tibetan force.[110] Equally important, his unit included Rupön Bökhangwa, a noncommissioned officer who was generally considered to be Tibet's best military leader. Lhalu wanted to coordinate a large strike force and then attack the Chinese in Jyekundo to free the operator, retrieve the wireless set, and strike a blow at Chinese attempts to prepare for war. Consequently, Lhalu ordered Mucha to set up defensive positions at Dengo to prevent any *further* Chinese penetration, if that was what they had in mind, but specifically ordered them not to

107. Ibid.: 55.
108. Ibid.: 50.
109. Ibid.: 56.
110. Ibid.

engage the enemy.[111] Lhalu's plan apparently had some substance, for several East Bank Khamba leaders such as the queen of Derge and the abbot of Darkye (Gomba) monastery had proposed a joint attack by Tibetan and East Bank Khamba forces on the newly arrived People's Liberation Army forces. They reasoned that since the Chinese Communists had only just arrived in Kham and were unfamiliar with the people and land, this would be an ideal time to attack. Support could also be obtained from a group of about 500 Nationalist troops still in the Jyekundo area.[112] Similarly, Lhalu had made secret contacts with the king of Nangchen (who was in a Chinese-controlled area) via sealed letters. And Maya, a Lhasa official stationed in Kham, recalled that he and Tshögaw were told to be on special alert and be ready to leave to fight.[113]

Events, however, did not go as planned. Local Dengo Khambas, including the monastic officials of Chökhorgön Monastery, deceived Mucha about the positions of the Chinese, and he fell prey to a Chinese ambush in which a number of his troops and riding horses were killed or wounded.[114] Mucha and Rupön Bökhangwa regrouped and attacked the Chinese from two sides. After a fierce battle at Yilung in which Bökhangwa and his son were killed, the two armies pulled back, establishing positions one day's march apart.[115]

The battle of Dengo was technically a victory for the Tibetans, in that they had pushed the Chinese back and demonstrated they could contend with the People's Liberation Army. The battle boosted the morale of the Tibetan forces in Kham, but it did not alter the basic military situation of the Tibetans, who were woefully undermanned and under-

111. Lhalu, interview.

112. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 431. Lhalu (interview) indirectly confirmed this. Rgyal mtshan phun tshogs (1986B: 14) wrote that the KMT commander actually sent the Tibetans a letter suggesting a joint attack on the Communists before they became well entrenched.

113. Maya (interview) passed on these letters sealed, but assumed that they dealt with the plan to attack the Chinese. He does not know what Nangchen responded.

114. Rnam rgyal dganb 'dus 1976: 186. Lhalu (interview) said it could have been deception on the part of the locals or they might not have known what the Chinese were up to. However, the latter possibility seems highly unlikely.

115. Ford's account has the Khamba militia slaughtering all Chinese in a magnificent victory (Ford 1958: 61–62). This appears to have been bazaar talk with no basis in reality.

armed. For Lhalu, moreover, it was a complete disaster since it cost him his best officer just before his planned major strike at Jyekundo. He said he considered it a major setback.[116]

Chinese opinion regarding the battle is unknown, but it was clearly only a tactical move aimed at eliminating the wireless set which threatened the surprise Blitzkrieg they were planning; no other encounters followed.

Despite the loss of Bökhangwa, Lhalu pursued his plan to go on the offensive against the Chinese in Jyekundo. After considerable communication with a few sympathetic leaders on the Chinese side of the Yangtse River, plans were formulated to attack in early September. Lhalu then contacted Lhasa for permission.[117]

Lhalu's proposal placed his fellow shapes in a difficult position. They had no way of assessing whether Lhalu's plan would succeed. They had, however, received direct and indirect advice from the Indians, British, and Americans that Tibet's best strategy was not to provoke the Chinese into attacking Tibet, and a sudden, unsuccessful offensive seemed likely to precipitate such an attack. They were therefore uncertain as to whether Lhalu's plan was a genuine opportunity to save Tibet, or one likely to end in a defeat that would then bring the PLA immediately into Tibet en masse. They cautiously replied to Lhalu, "If you are able to attack and be successful, that would be good, but because your mission is to defend the border area continuously, you should think carefully about whether you are able to guarantee that this attack will not affect our territory negatively. You have to think carefully about the benefits and losses this would bring to Tibet in the future." This response, while not an outright refusal, was worded in such a way that Tibetan officials would take it as a negative answer, since it made Lhalu solely responsible for all the consequences. Lhalu consequently scrapped his offensive plans, sending an order to all his officials and commanders ordering them not to initiate attacks across the border.[118]

116. Lhalu, interview.

117. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 431. Lhalu (interview) confirmed this.

118. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 431. Lhalu (interview) confirms this. Lhalu used the following old Tibetan saying to convey that order: *dgra la phar rgol mi byed pa / chos ldan rgyal po'i bzhed srol dang / tshur rgol yan por mi gtong pa / srid kyi rgyal po'i bzhed*

CHINESE SUPPORTERS AMONG THE GELUGPA HIERARCHY

One of the more important components of the Chinese political strategy for the liberation of Tibet was their plan to separate support for the Tibetan government from support for religion. So long as Khambas felt that their religious beliefs and institutions were threatened, it was reasonable to assume that they would fight along with the Tibetan government against the Chinese regardless of their grievances against the Lhasa government. Since the Chinese did not want to become embroiled in a drawn-out guerrilla war, they made a major effort to reassure the Khambas. Not only did they repeatedly broadcast statements and distribute pamphlets promising religious freedom and respect for monasteries, but, equally important, they enlisted support from a number of the most prominent high incarnate lamas such as Geda Trulku, the Panchen Lama (designate), as well as other respected monastic leaders such as Geshe Sherab Gyatso and the former abbot of Sera Che college. The Panchen Lama's support was particularly important since he was the second greatest incarnation in the Gelugpa sect and had a large following in Kham.

The Panchen Lama at that time was the incarnation of the Panchen Lama who had died in exile in Jyekundo in 1937. Although several candidates were subsequently discovered, he was the choice of the officials of the late Panchen Lama, who refused to send him to Lhasa for final confirmation because they feared that once he was out of their hands, the Tibetan government would take advantage of him. They simply unilaterally declared him the new Panchen Lama. When the Chinese Communists took power in 1949, these officials immediately linked their future to the new dominant power in China, sending Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh the following telegram of congratulations in the Panchen's name on 1 October 1949:

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srol yin. (Not atacking the enemy / is the custom of religious kings / Not allowing [the enemy] to attack your territory / is the custom of the political king.) (Maya, interview.)

1. Telegram from Panchen Lama to Chairman Mao and Commander-in-Chief Chu.

Chairman Mao of Central People's Government and Commander-in-Chief Chu of Chinese People's Liberation Army, Peking:

"With superior wisdom and courage Your Excellencies have completed the grand salvation of the country and the people. The success of your army has brought joy to the whole country. For generations in the past I have received kindness and favour from the country. During the past twenty years and more I have ceaselessly struggled for the territorial and sovereign integrity of Tibet. It is to be deeply regretted that I have had no success. I am now lingering in Chinghai and waiting for an order to return to Tibet. Fortunately under the leadership of Your Excellencies, the North West has now been liberated and the Central People's Government has been established. All those who are conscientious applaud with one accord. From now on, the realisation of the democratic happiness of the people and revival of the country are only questions of time and it will not be long before Tibet is liberated. I sincerely present to Your Excellencies on behalf of all the people in Tibet our highest respects and offer our heartfelt support.

Panchen 'O-erh-te-ni'
1st October 1949[119]

Mao Tse-Tung and Chu Teh replied on 23 November, assuring the Panchen Lama of the impending liberation:

We are very glad to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of 1st October. The people of Tibet are patriotic and opposed to foreign aggression. They are dissatisfied with the policies of the reactionary government of the Kuomintang and wish to become a member of the big family of a united, strong and new China where all races co-operate on the basis of equality. The Central People's Government and the Chinese People's Liberation Army will undoubtedly satisfy this desire of the Ti-

119. F0371/83325, enclosure in Nanking dispatch to the British Foreign Office, dated 27 December 1949. The enclosure was taken from the *New China Daily News*, Nanking, dated 25 November 1949. On the same date the Panchen Lama sent a parallel telegram to General Feng Teh-huai, vice-chairman of the People's Revolutionary Military Committee and commander of the First Field Army of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. It is notable for saying: "We sincerely beseech that you will lead your righteous troops to liberate Tibet, eradicate the traitorous elements, and rescue the people of Tibet." (ibid.)

> betan people. It is hoped that you and all patriots in Tibet will unitedly exert all your efforts in the struggle for the liberation of Tibet and unity between the Chinese and Tibetan peoples.[120]

A second famous lama who joined forces with the Chinese Communists was Geda Trulku, the incarnate lama from Beri monastery near Kanze (see Map 5). Geda Trulku held the position of vice-chairman of the Dokham People's Provisional Government and was a member of the Southwest Military Committee. He had volunteered or had been sent by the Southwest Military Committee to Chamdo to obtain permission to continue to Lhasa, where he was to try to convince the government to agree to the peaceful liberation of Tibet. He arrived in Chamdo on 24 July 1950.[121]

Geda Trulku's contact with the Chinese Communists went back to the Long March in 1936, when he helped the ragtag Communist force when they passed through Kanze, even hiding some wounded soldiers after the main force left the area.[122] At this time Chu Teh himself gave Geda Trulku a signed letter saying that Geda and his monastery had helped the PLA and should be protected by any PLA unit that passed. Geda Trulku kept that letter secret, pasted to the back of a temple scroll painting throughout the Kuomintang period. Then, in 1949, when the Communist victory seemed assured, he sent four men via Tsinghai and Gansu to meet Chu Teh in Peking. Chu Teh greeted the emissaries warmly and sent them back with a message saying the PLA would soon arrive in Kansu on its way to liberate Tibet.[123]

In Chamdo, Geda Trulku met with Lhalu and explained his mission. He argued that the Chinese Communists were going to liberate Tibet one way or the other, and peaceful means would be preferable to military ones. If the Lhasa government tried to fight against the Chinese, it would not only cause the loss of many lives but would lead to the destruction of Buddhism and monasticism. He said that he had come to

120. Ibid.

121. Khreng 1982: 219.

122. Geda disguised the Communist wounded in Tibetan clothes and treated their wounds. He also moved them to different locations so they would not be captured by the Nationalist forces. (Ibid.: 218–19.)

123. Epstein 1983: 243. Epstein indicated that this letter is now in the Revolutionary Museum in Beijing.

Chamdo because he felt that it was critical that the Tibetan government be convinced not to take up arms against China. He was carrying the following three-point peace proposal from the Chinese:

1. Tibet must acknowledge it is a part of China.
2. The People's Liberation Army must be deployed on Tibet's international borders.
3. Tibet must cut off all ties with imperialist countries.

Geda told Lhalu that if Tibet accepted these points, there would be no need to invade Tibet, and the religious system of government could be retained.[124]

Lhalu contacted Lhasa about this and was informed that while this was being considered in Lhasa, he should neither let Geda Trulku go to Lhasa nor permit him to return to Kanze; he must be kept in Chamdo.[125] Two weeks later, on 21 August, Geda Trulku suddenly died. It is widely believed that he was poisoned, and the Chinese have claimed that he was killed by Ford, the English wireless operator at Chamdo. However, Ford not only denied this in his book but never admitted it during his five years in a Chinese prison despite other "admissions." If Geda Trulku was really murdered, it is likely that it was done by the Tibetan administration in Chamdo.

The role of these monks and lamas cannot be underestimated. For Khamba villagers, it was difficult to see how great lamas and scholars such as these could support the Chinese Communists if the Communists were really going to destroy religion as the Tibetan government claimed. The public support garnered by these lamas and monks enhanced the credibility of the Chinese promises of religious freedom and thus was fundamental to China's plan for a peaceful liberation of Tibet.

The motivations of the lamas and learned monks are difficult to assess. Political expediency, belief in the Communists' promised policy toward minorities, disenchantment with the traditional system in Tibet, and enmity to Taktra and the Lhasa government all play a part. It is

124. Lhalu, interview. These, of course, are the same three points the Chinese ambassador in Delhi later presented to Shakabpa.
125. Ibid.

reasonable to assume that none of these religious figures ever dreamed that the Communists would totally destroy the monastic system, as they actually did during the years following the Tibetan uprising in 1959.

NGABÖ REPLACED LHALU IN KHAM

While Shakabpa and his Tibetan mission began negotiations with the Chinese in New Delhi, a new shape replaced Lhalu in Kham.

Lhalu's three-year term of office in Kham was due to end in the summer of 1950, and in early 1950 Lhalu asked Lhasa to send his replacement. Ngabö was appointed shape in June and left Lhasa for Chamdo on 11 July, but Lhalu remained in Chamdo to assist him until the current crisis was over.[126] Ngabö's attitude is reflected in comments he made to officials he met along the way. One official from Kundeling Labrang recalled that Ngabö told him Tibet could not fight against the Chinese Communists, because the Chinese had the latest weaponry and well-trained and experienced soldiers. Ngabö recalled that a single Chinese warlord had taken Lhasa in 1909–1910, so how could the Tibetans possibly stop the whole of China? Ngabö told Kundeling that he was convinced it was better to try to negotiate a peaceful solution and that he had already discussed this with Taktra and with colleagues in the Kashag.[127] Ngabö arrived in Chamdo in early September 1950; his views, as can be seen, diverged significantly from those of Lhalu, who was inclined to fight, however slim the likelihood of victory. Theoretically, they jointly ran the government in Chamdo, but Lhalu considered Ngabö to be the actual governor-general of Kham and saw his own role as temporary and primarily advisory.[128] Thus, he did not openly object when Ngabö removed the fortifications Lhalu had had constructed on the mountaintops because Ngabö saw them as unnecessarily likely to

126. Lungshar Chanjula, interview; Maya, interview. At the same time the Kashag ordered the other Lhasa officials in Chamdo to remain until replacements could be sent, since Ngabö was not bringing a full complement of officials with him.

127. Kundeling Dzasa, interview. Horsur (interview) also met Ngabö on his way to Chamdo and reports a similar conversation, as does Maya (interview).

128. Lhalu, interview.

provoke the Chinese. Nor did Lhalu protest Ngabö's decision not to recruit more Khamba militia.[129] Their underlying friction was expressed instead by their respective servants and staff, each of whom covertly derided the other shape and his staff. Consequently, it is no surprise that their "joint" administration very soon dissolved.

Lhalu recalled that one day soon after Ngabö arrived he mentioned that he thought Chamdo was too small an area for two shapes to reside together; it caused excessive hardship to the local people, who had to provide corvée labor services and products. He suggested that Lhalu leave and set up a new base of operations at Khyungpo south of Jyekundo, while he remained in Chamdo. Lhalu, eager to leave Chamdo before the fighting began, leaped at this opportunity. He replied that he had remained in Kham after his term had expired only to help Ngabö; if Ngabö now felt that his help was no longer required and was ready to assume *full* administrative responsibility, Lhalu was willing to contact Lhasa to ask them if he could return. Lhasa agreed.[130]

At the very end of September 1950, Lhalu, with his immediate servants and staff, and with one wireless unit, departed for Lhasa, leaving Ngabö in sole command of Chamdo and Kham. Lhalu had not gotten far, however, when the Lhasa government changed their minds and (via wireless) ordered him to set up headquarters at Lho Dzong. Lhalu was informed that the Trongdra Regiment and some monk soldiers had left Lhasa for Kham, to be placed under his command.[131]

The Chinese Communists, in the meantime, had asked Panda Rapga to deliver a proposal to Chamdo for the peaceful liberation of Tibet.[132] He arrived in Chamdo a day or so before Ngabö arrived from Lhasa.[133] Ngabö decided to use Ragpa to open communications with the Chi-

129. Horsur, interview.

130. Maya, interview; Lhalu, interview.

131. Lhalu, interview; Lungshar Chanjula, interview; Horsur, interview; Maya, interview.

132. Lhalu, interview. Rapga was the Khamba who headed the Tibetan Improvement Party in Kalimpong and had been deported from India to China in 1946. Patterson (1960: 65) and Ford (1958: 79) reported that Rapga had come to Chamdo seeking Lhasa agreement to an autonomous Kham in return for military support against the Communist army. Lhalu (interview) emphatically denied that Rapga discussed this with him.

133. Lhalu, interview. Ford erroneously placed Rapga in Chamdo at the time that Geda Lama died.

nese and sent him, with one of his officials, Yeshe Thargye, to Tachienlu to set up negotiations. However, by the time they arrived there the fighting had started and both were placed under arrest.

While all of this was unfolding, Ngabö made a military decision that ended in the capture of the entire Chamdo force. Ngabö had brought the two portable wireless sets from Lhasa that Lhalu had repeatedly requested after the loss of the set at Dengo in July 1950, but he decided not to install either of the sets along the border. One Lhalu took to Lho Dzong, and the other was kept as a spare unit in Chamdo. Before the Chinese attack, Ford tried to persuade Ngabö to send the unused set to Riwoche so that information regarding the escape route at Lagong-Ngamda could be received speedily, but Ngabö refused.[134]

Ngabö also made no attempt to create a ready reserve force. All the Tibetan troops, except a few hundred in Chamdo, were scattered across the front; there was no second line of defense in case the Chinese broke through at any point. The need for a reserve force had been pointed out by the British fifteen years earlier, but this report apparently was never made available to the officers in Kham.

As September came to a close, speculation abounded as to whether the approach of winter weather meant that the Chinese would not launch an attack. Day after day, messages, often conflicting, arrived reporting that the Chinese were crossing the Yangtse at Gamto Druga or that they had already crossed it or were about to cross it. As these reports increased in frequency, the Lhasa officials who had come with Lhalu three years earlier held a secret meeting. Believing that it was not possible to stop a determined Chinese attack on the Chamdo area because of its vulnerable location, they decided to try to persuade Ngabö to move his headquarters to the more defensible Lho Dzong. There, they felt, they had a chance of holding off a larger Chinese force, thanks to the rough terrain and a high, defensible pass. They argued that if all the officials in Kham were captured and held as hostages, it would be difficult for the government to send a strong army to counterattack if they wanted to do so.[135] Ngabö responded that his responsibility was to defend the Chamdo area and he could not relocate his headquarters.

134. Ford 1958: 98–106.
135. Ibid.

He told them, however, that if *they* wanted to leave he had no objection. They all stayed.

THE CHINESE INVASION BEGINS

Since China's attempts to begin serious negotiations with Tibet had yielded no results, the Chinese escalated the pressure. On 5 October 1950, while Shakabpa waited in New Delhi for a reply from Lhasa, the Southwest Army Corps of the People's Liberation Army crossed the Yangtse River en masse and attacked the Tibetan positions in Kham.[136] The Chinese military force was divided into four major prongs (see Map 11). Speed, surprise, and night attacks were employed, with the goal of trapping the Tibetan army in a pincer movement that would cut off the southern and central escape routes.[137]

In the north, troops of the 154th Regiment crossed the Yangtse River above Dengo and advanced day and night to the Jyekundo area. From there, they bypassed the Tibetan forces in the Khyungpo area and went through Nangchen to launch an attack on Riwoche. They spent the first part of the invasion marching rapidly to confront Riwoche and did not actually start their attack until 15 or 16 October.

At Dengo, northeast of Chamdo, Commander Mucha's regiment was initially able to block the Chinese attempts to cross the Yangtse for several days, but he was forced to pull back when Chinese units crossed the river north of him and attacked his northern flank. He retreated toward Chamdo but kept his entire force intact as a fighting unit.

In the central zone, the Chinese attacked at Gamto Druga, the main site for crossing the Yangtse River. Here, a small Tibetan force of about 200 dug-in troops initially inflicted heavy losses on the Chinese, but as more and more Chinese managed to get across the river, they were forced to retreat, with the Chinese in hot pursuit.

136. Maya, interview.

137. The beginning of the invasion is normally cited as 6 or 7 October, but the Chinese 154th Regiment of the Southwest Army Corps began their attack above Dengo at midnight on 5 October: a platoon secretly crossed the Yangtse River to attack a small Tibetan border force protecting the crossing at Chökhorgön monastery. The Chinese routed this force without ever firing a shot, and the 154th Regiment spent the next five days moving their regiment across the river. (Khreng 1982: 227.) Chinese regiments usually had 4,000 combat troops.

The headquarters of the Tibetan military in the central zone was about a day's march west of Gamto Druga at Jomda. When reports of the attack reached their commander, Karchunga, he withdrew to Rangsumdo, a narrow defile that made a natural defensive position. There he fought with the advancing Chinese. Unable to hold this position, he withdrew to Kyushung, where he joined another group of Tibetan troops under Lishiba. Thinking he had outdistanced the Chinese, Karchunga decided to spend the night at Kyushung. However, rather than halting after the battle at Rangsumdo, the Chinese advanced at full speed and launched an attack in the middle of the night. Banging gongs, shouting, and firing artillery shells, the Chinese spread terror among the shocked Tibetans, who were unable to resist. From this point on, Karchunga's troops ceased to be a disciplined fighting force. Kyushung was roughly three days' march from Chamdo.

The Chinese 157th Regiment struck in the south on 7 and 8 October. After crossing the Yangtse River in force near Markham and overpowering the Tibetan outposts there, they pushed toward Markham, where Derge Sey commanded the Tatang Regiment. Derge Sey must have had no will to fight: on 12 October he surrendered his entire force of over 400 troops. This effectively cut the southern escape route. The Chinese southern attack force then went to occupy the Po and Pasho areas before starting to move north to Chamdo. Markham was seven days' march from Chamdo.

Lhasa was first informed about the invasion on the morning of Thursday, 12 October. It decided to make no mention of the invasion in any radio broadcasts, presumably to avoid panic and disturbances within Tibet. The first public report of the invasion of Kham was an unconfirmed broadcast from Delhi on 15 October. When Ford heard the news of the initial Chinese attacks, he again asked Ngabö to send the spare wireless unit to Riwoche but Ngabö refused, telling him that Riwoche had been reinforced and there was no sign of Chinese activity in that area. He told the incredulous Ford that he needed the spare radio in Chamdo in case anything went wrong with his set, since he had to keep in communication with Lhasa.[138]

In Chamdo, the impending disaster quickly became apparent as word started arriving from fleeing district officials and soldiers of the

138. Ford 1958: 109.

Chinese victories at Gamto Druga, Rangsumdo, Markham, and so on. The Tibetan officials at Chamdo again appealed to Ngabö to contact Lhasa and ask permission to withdraw to Lho Dzong. Ngabö explained that on 15 October, Tshögow, his aide-de-camp, had spoken via wireless with Dumra, a Kashag aide-de-camp, in what has become in Tibetan circles a famous exchange:

> Tshögow said to Dumra: "Look we have sent three urgent messages [in code to Lhasa] and haven't received a single reply. What is going on? As far as we are concerned we see ourselves as virtually caught and every second is important to us. If you don't give us a reply we don't know what to do."
>
> To which Dumra replied: "Right now it is the period of the Kashag's picnic and they are all participating in this. Your telegrams are being decoded and then we will send you a reply." At this Tshögow got furious and in a glaring breach of Tibetan etiquette angrily said, "Shit on their picnic! Though we are blocked here, and the nation is threatened and every minute may make a difference to our fate, you talk about that shit picnic."[139]

This ended the conversation. The shapes obviously could not decide whether the situation was as bad as was being reported and feared making the decision to withdraw all forces from Kham. In the past Tibet had always managed to muddle through crises, so the shapes attended their picnic and did not respond. Ngabö, though himself a shape, also did not want to take responsibility for giving up Kham, but waited in Chamdo for a communiqué from Lhasa—or for the Chinese to arrive.

On 16 October, the full extent of the rout of Karchunga reached Chamdo. With two Chinese forces, one from Markham and the other from Jomda, pushing forward with no Tibetan forces between them and Chamdo, the situation was untenable, but not hopeless until the Chinese slipped behind to cut off the road to Lhasa. When, late on the evening of the sixteenth, a messenger from Riwoche arrived with the news that the Chinese were approaching that town,[140] it became impossible to remain in Chamdo, and Ngabö asked Lhasa for permis-

139. Maya, interview. In Tibetan: *skyag pa'i gling kha.*

140. Ford 1958: 125. Maya (interview) said that the news from Riwoche was that the town had already fallen, but Ford's account seems more likely.

sion to surrender or flee. The next day Lhasa ordered him to retreat.[141] Consequently, late on the seventeenth Ngabö informed his officials that if they did not leave immediately, they would most likely be trapped by the Chinese.[142] A few troops were left behind to burn the armory; Ngabö and others left Chamdo before dawn.[143] Ford described the scene in Chamdo at 7 A.M. on the morning of the eighteenth, when he first discovered that Ngabö had left him without any warning.

> Already panic was breaking out in the town. People were running in all directions, carrying or dragging their personal belongings. The stalls in the main street were deserted. . . . Then a small band of Khamba levies came running past, shouting angrily and looking murderous. [As Ford was riding back into the main section of Chamdo where his wireless station was located, he met Trimon Depön's two rupöns, who told him:] "Ride away. You cannot go back [to the main part of town]. They will kill you if you try!" [Ford asked,] "Are the Chinese in the town?" [The Tibetans said,] "Not the Chinese—the Khambas! Ride away, for your life!" "What has happened?" I demanded. [The answer was,] "The Khambas were left without transport, and now they will kill any Lhasa official—even you. They nearly killed me. . . . The Khambas are looting now."[144]

While the Khambas and, it is said, some of the monks from Phagpa Labrang and Chamdo monastery looted the possessions of the Lhasa officials and the guns and ammunition from the armory, which had been set on fire by Tibetan soldiers but not completely destroyed, Ngabö and the others raced toward the crossroads at Lagong-Ngamda.

Earlier, when Lhalu was traveling to Lho Dzong, he noted that Lagong-Ngamda was unguarded and told Ngabö by wireless that he thought an army unit should be dispatched at once to defend the crossroads. Ngabö agreed and ordered Laya Chariba and his 100 Nyadang Regiment soldiers to leave Chamdo immediately and take up positions there. Laya Chariba, however, appears purposely to have procrasti-

141. Ford (1958: 127) wrote that he later found out that a coded message he had sent on the seventeenth contained the request to Lhasa for permission to surrender, which was refused. There is no verification for this.

142. Maya, interview.

143. Ford, 1958: 125; Maya, interview.

144. Ford 1958: 127–28.

nated, arguing that first he had to make careful preparations and get transport. In the end, his unit did not leave Chamdo until Ngabö's evacuation, and the critical junction was totally unprotected.[145]

Ford, fleeing on horseback, passed soldiers plodding along with their families and as many personal belongings as they could carry. Eight hours after he left, at 4 P.M., he overtook Ngabö and the others at the village of Lamda, where they had stopped briefly for rest and food. A messenger arrived at Lamda with a written message for Ngabö informing him that the Chinese had begun their attack on Riwoche the previous evening. The messenger had no idea of the outcome, since he had been sent as soon as the attack began.[146] From Lamda, the trail west to Lagong-Ngamda rose to cross the 15,000-foot Lagong pass that overlooked Lagong-Ngamda and the road to Lho Dzong and Lhasa. By 6 P.M. on the eighteenth, the fleeing Tibetans had reached the foot of the pass; there, another messenger arrived with an oral message that Riwoche had fallen.[147] Phulunga, the commander, had panicked at the first shots and immediately fled. His rupön and other noncommissioned officers tried to stop him at the Cagsam bridge, but he bought his way out by giving them a huge crate of cigarettes as a bribe.[148] Leaderless, the soldiers put up only weak resistance. The Chinese easily took Riwoche and started the race to cut off Ngabö at the crossroads.[149]

The Tibetans pushed on to the Lagong pass in the dark on a dangerous, narrow trail, reaching the pass at 10 P.M. From the pass to the foot of the mountain took another three hours, and from there to Lagong-Ngamda was a journey of several more hours. The question on everyone's mind was whether the Chinese had already arrived at the crossroads, so Ngabö sent some servants on horseback to check this. When Ngabö and the others were halfway down the mountain, they met a group of about thirty soldiers who were coming from Lhasa to Chamdo with artillery, rifles, and ammunition. They had crossed Lagong-Ngamda without knowing that Riwoche had fallen and were

145. Lhalu, interview.
146. Ford 1958: 128.
147. Ibid.: 131–32.
148. Horsur, interview; Lhalu, Maya, and others (interviews) confirmed that Phulunga fled without fighting.
149. Khreng 1982: 247.

traveling by night in order to reach Ngabö with the ammunition and cannon before Chamdo fell. Ngabö ordered them to throw their arms and ammunition over the side of the mountain and join his group.[150]

Soon after this, Ngabö's scouts returned with information that the Chinese had reached Lagong-Ngamda a few hours earlier, but they were not sure how many troops were there.[151] In reality, as soon as Riwoche was taken, about 100 Chinese cavalry and infantry of the 154th Regiment continued to Lagong-Ngamda at full speed, traveling about 50 miles a day. The Tibetans' retreat had been cut off, and Ngabö decided to surrender rather than fight. He ordered everyone to fall back to Drugugön, a nearby monastery.[152]

Some Lhasa officials such as Maya did not agree with Ngabö's decision and pushed on toward Lagong-Ngamda by themselves. They ran into three columns of Chinese soldiers marching on foot at the base of the mountain and were arrested. These Chinese followed their "nationalities policy" and were extremely polite.[153] In the meantime, as Ngabö and the others at Drugugön monastery were discussing what to do, Commander Mucha rode up with about seventy cavalry. Ford, desperate to escape, ran up to him and asked him how many troops he had. Mucha told him that his force of about 400 was intact and coming up behind on foot. In fact, Mucha had brought not only his soldiers but their wives and personal belongings. Having held their own against the Chinese twice, his soldiers showed no fear or panic. Mucha told Ford that the Chinese could not have reached Lagong-Ngamda in strength and that his men could easily break through to Lho Dzong. "Wait here until I have seen Ngabö Shape," he said.[154]

When Mucha came out from his meeting with Ngabö he told Ford that they were going to surrender and that he was sorry to have delayed Ford in his plan to escape.[155] It appears that Ngabö felt that Mucha's force was inadequate to break out. Ngabö, ready to capitulate, now sent Simpön Khempo and Laya Charipa to find some Chinese to accept his surrender. Soon they encountered a Chinese patrol, which took them

150. Ford 1958: 132.
151. Ibid.
152. Khreng 1982: 247.
153. Maya, interview.
154. Ford 1958: 135.
155. Ibid.: 136.

to their headquarters. They had brought a sword to offer in surrender, but the Chinese soldiers confiscated this, and as a final irony, they had nothing to offer symbolically in surrender. Thus, on 19 October 1950, the Chinese captured Ngabö, all the Tibetan officials with him, and a large number of soldiers and weapons. The battle for Kham was over.[156] At Drugugön, the Chinese served the Tibetans a big meal with meat and vegetables and told the Tibetans of their mission to serve, not harm, them. The officials were then all sent back to Chamdo, where they were placed under house arrest while each of the soldiers was given a silver Chinese coin (*dayan*) and sent home.[157]

With the main Tibetan force destroyed, the Chinese pushed on, meeting no resistance. On 22 October, they took Lho Dzong, Lhalu having already fled west to Pemba Dzong; on 27 October, they took Shobando; and on 31 October they captured Pemba Dzong, again meeting no resistance, for by this time Lhalu had moved still further west, to Giamda.[158]

It had taken just two weeks to destroy the main Tibetan defense force totally and, in the process, to capture a shape and other important officials. The central road to Lhasa was wide open to the Chinese; they could easily have taken Giamda, where Lhalu commanded a small number of new recruits recently sent from Lhasa, and then have moved into Lhoka and Lhasa. They did not choose this option. From the beginning they had wanted to liberate Tibet "peacefully." Now, having demonstrated the military might of the People's Republic of China, they sat back to see whether this lesson would convince the Tibetans to open negotiations and accept their terms for liberation and reunification.[159]

In Lhasa, the disaster did not silence the sarcastic street songs:

156. Sambo, interview. The only Tibetan army force that escaped from Kham intact was the force from Khyungpo under Tshögaw. Their area had been bypassed by the Chinese Riwoche force and they were able to withdraw to Lho Dzong. (Lhalu, interview.)

157. The Chinese strategy of sending the Tibetan soldiers directly to their village homes and paying them one silver coin for expenses not only created a good impression among the troops and made it difficult for the Tibetan government to reconstitute the regiments, but at the same time avoided having to administer prisoner-of-war camps with thousands of prisoners.

158. USFR, 793B.00/12-2950, enclosure to dispatch no. 293 from the American consul, Calcutta, dated 29 December 1950.

159. The Chinese also sent a military force from Sinkiang Province across the Kun-

The British rifles
were delivered to the plain of Chamdo
[and] taking care of their travel, food, and lodging
by begging and begging, [the soldiers] returned.[160]

This song referred derogatorily to the complete disorganization in which the soldiers returned to Central Tibet.

Led by the two-faced Derge Sey,
[then] the hopeless Commander Karchunga,
the Kham government's military regimental headquarters
is filled with the smell of diarrheic excrement.

The great and ferocious commander
who never set eyes on the enemy,
by a piece of shit
got frightened and ran away.[161]

This song refers to the flight of Commander Phulunga in Riwoche.

From among 100 good men,
there is the capable Commander Mucha.
The hopeless herd of foxes
is the Kham governor-general and his officials.

Ngabo went militantly,
[and] Lhalu stayed leisurely.
Brother Ragashar [the commander of the Tibetan force at Nagchuka]
built a dam of sand.[162]

Tibet's response to the Chinese attacks is the subject of the next chapter.

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lun Mountains to Western Tibet. It had no major role in subsequent events and is not discussed here. A survivor of that initial force, Tse (1984), has written an interesting article on his experiences.

160. In Tibetan: *me mda' dbyin ji kha thung / chab mdo gzhung la bskyal nas / tsha zhag 'grigs pa'i lam rgyags / slong gin slong gin log byung.*

161. In Tibetan: *sde sras da rus gtsos byas / byab chung dkar chung mda' dpon / khams gzhung dmag sgar nang la / smyang ma'i dri ma'i rgyang song. dmag dpon dgra lha'i rgyal po / dgra bo mig gis ma mthong / skyag pa che ba gcig la / dzur 'drogs thebs nas bros song.*

162. In Tibetan: *mi bzang brgya yi dkyil na / go chod mu bya mda' dpon / byab chung wa mo'i khyu tshogs / mdo spyi ngo las rnam pa. nga phod ngar nas 'thad song / lha klu lhod nas bzhungs shag / jo lags rag kha shar gyis / bye ma'i rag cig skyon shag.*

19

AFTER THE FALL OF CHAMDO

On 17 October, almost two weeks after the Chinese offensive began in Kham, the Kashag informed Shakabpa in Delhi of the Chinese invasion and the likelihood that Chamdo would fall within a few days.[1] They instructed him to contact the Chinese ambassador immediately to try to stop the invasion.[2] This news led the Tibetan trade mission, which was also in Delhi, to decide not to open planned negotiations on military aid with the Americans, since they feared that if the Chinese found out it might impede Shakabpa's task.[3]

SHAKABPA CONFRONTS THE CHINESE

On the eighteenth, while Ngabö and his staff in Kham hurriedly fled Chamdo, the Shakabpa delegation met with the Chinese ambassador in Delhi and accused China of flagrantly ignoring international law by attacking without warning while peaceful negotiations were in prog-

1. USFR, 793B.00/10–2850, conversation with the Tibetan trade mission cited in a telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. State Department, dated 28 October 1950; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 423.

2. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 423.

3. The Tibetan trade mission (Surkhang and Khencung) had called on Ambassador Henderson on 16 October to discuss Tibet's military-aid requirements. They were told to return for discussions on the eighteenth, but instead sent the U.S. Embassy a cryptic letter which said they could not make the appointment due to "urgent works." (USFR, 793B.00/10–2650, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 26 October 1950.)

ress.[4] The Chinese ambassador immediately blamed the attack on the Tibetans' failure to go to Peking to negotiate:

> We also know about the attack on Chamdo. However, since we gave you terms to respond to, almost a month has passed so we are not in violation of any laws. Whatever people may say throughout the world, it is our firm decision that we will liberate Formosa and Tibet. It is better now that you accept Tibet as part of China. And if your delegation goes now to Peking, there will be no further military suppression.[5]

The Chinese later repeated this charge in a note to the Indian government dated 16 November 1950, stating that their ambassador in Delhi, Yuan, as well as their chargé d'affaires, Shen, had told the Tibetans in Delhi "that it was imperative that they should hasten to Peking in September, or that the said delegation should bear the responsibilities and be held responsible for all the consequences resulting from the delay."[6] Shakabpa then went to the Indian Foreign Ministry, informing them of the invasion and requesting their help in persuading the Chinese to stop.[7]

The deteriorating situation in Chamdo finally forced the Tibetan National Assembly to compromise on the Chinese three-point proposal, with the hope of preventing a renewed Chinese offensive. On 21 October the Kashag informed the mission in New Delhi that Lhasa no longer had wireless communication with Chamdo[8] and instructed them:

> (1) To proceed immediately to China for negotiations.
>
> (2) Regarding Point One—that Tibet is a part of China—If you have to accept this it is permissible if you are able to guarantee that the Dalai Lama's name and authority will remain intact and the Tibetan Government will continue to function like it is now making decisions and acting independently.

4. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 423–25.
5. Ibid.: 424–25.
6. Carlyle 1953: 550–51.
7. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 424–25.
8. As was seen in Chapter 18, Ngabö left Chamdo with his officials early in the morning on 18 October, without telling Ford or sending a final wireless message informing Lhasa that Chamdo was being evacuated. Lhasa therefore could only surmise that the absence of messages from Chamdo and the failure of Chamdo to respond to Lhasa-originated messages indicated that Chamdo had fallen.

(3) Regarding Point Two—that all foreign trade and political dealings will be done through China—you have to convey to the Chinese that Tibet will continue to handle all its foreign dealings by itself.

(4) Regarding Point Three—that Chinese soldiers will take over security/defence forces in Tibet—this is a very dangerous issue and we do not accept this. Tibet will appoint its own soldiers to protect our own territory.

(5) Impress on the Chinese that no harm should befall the Tibetan government officials who were captured in Eastern Tibet and that all Tibetan prisoners should be returned home speedily.[9]

Shakabpa and the mission were disappointed by this response, feeling that it was too little, too late. Nonetheless, they immediately contacted the Chinese and arranged a luncheon meeting at the Chinese Embassy for the next day, 22 October.[10]

In Lhasa, however, even this mild compromise produced a very strong negative reaction from those who believed that once Tibet admitted being a part of China, Tibet's legal status would be transformed and her appeals for help would have little weight. Many of the officials holding this view felt that it would be better if the Dalai Lama sought refuge in a foreign country and continued the struggle for independence from abroad as the 13th Dalai Lama had done forty years earlier. The main forces behind this position appear to have been Surkhang Shape and Drönyerchemmo Phala.

This disagreement reflected, to an extent, a deeper political cleavage. Taktra, the seventy-five-year-old regent,—the "old man," as he was derogatorily called—had become very unpopular during the previous four or five years. The Reting affair and a resurgence of corruption had eroded the esteem in which Taktra had been held. Many officials now believed that Tibet had to respond to the Chinese threat in a unified and strong fashion and that to do this it was necessary to remove the unpopular and divisive Taktra. In late September, for example, an anonymous poster, put up on walls throughout Lhasa, accused Taktra of emptying the treasury and of making secret plans to remove the Dalai Lama from Lhasa in case of trouble. The poster appealed to the Three Seats to persuade the fifteen-year-old Dalai Lama to take power imme-

9. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 425.
10. Ibid.

diately. It said, "If this is done, Tibet will be unified behind the government in the event of any calamity."[11]

But the memory of Reting Rimpoche's destruction of Khyungram and his family in 1939 stopped the officials from outwardly criticizing or opposing Taktra. The answer lay in appeal to an authority above the regent; either the Dalai Lama, or the protective deities and oracles. It was through the latter that the center of power was shifted during the month from mid-October to mid-November 1950.

The beginning of this shift in power was the sudden reversal of the decision regarding the first point of the Chinese Ambassador's proposal. The Dalai Lama was informed about this point on 21 October and at once reacted strongly against it. He said he thought that "if we accept that we are a part of China then of course by definition we belong to China and it will be difficult [in the future] to do what we want. I thought it was a bad idea and suggested that the protective deities be consulted through the mechanism of a 'divine lottery divination.'"[12] The regent organized a lottery ceremony for the next morning in the presence of the Dalai Lama as well as various high-ranking government officials. The lottery indicated that the government should not agree that Tibet was a part of China, and an urgent telegram was immediately sent to Shakabpa in Delhi countermanding the earlier one.[13]

Meanwhile, in Delhi on the morning of 23 October, the Tibetan delegation was preparing to leave for their luncheon at the Chinese Embassy when they learned of the urgent telegram from Lhasa. Although the car the Chinese had sent to pick them up had already arrived, the Tibetans took an hour to decode the message, which was dated 22 October, one day later than the previous telegram. Shakabpa recalled that he was shocked when he read the opening line: "By the order of his Holiness the Dalai Lama," for at that time the Dalai Lama was not yet in power.[14] The Lhasa communiqué read:

> Regarding the reply to the Chinese Three Points, we have had meetings between the Regent and Kashag and also discussed this with the National Assembly and have communicated our decisions to you which we

11. *Statesman* (of India), 26 September 1950.
12. Dalai Lama, interview.
13. Dalai Lama, interview; J. Taring, interview; Anon1, interview.
14. Shakabpa, interview.

> hope you have received. However, with regard to Point One regarding Tibet's acceptance of being a part of China, the Dalai Lama ordered that a lottery-divination should be done to determine whether this will cause any harm to Tibet in the future. Consequently, we did such a lottery-divination in Norbulinga in the chapel of Gombo where we invited both the deities Gombo and Lhamo together when we rolled the lottery. The lottery answered that if you accept that Tibet is a part of China then this will be harmful for Tibet. Therefore, we have to rely on this answer so do not accept any of the three Chinese points. However, you should all leave [Delhi] for Peking by the 26th of October.[15]

Embarrassed and angry, the delegation told Ambassador Yuan that they had just received instructions from Lhasa ordering them to leave Delhi for Peking by 26 October. The ambassador was not put off by this, but asked Shakabpa what reply he had received regarding the three points. Shakabpa answered that there had been no reply to this, but he felt that Yuan could tell from his expression and demeanor that this was not true. Shakabpa said that the mission would leave the next day for Kalimpong to pick up all their winter clothes and would then go directly to Calcutta. Yuan replied that all their papers would be issued by the Chinese Consulate in Calcutta.[16] About a week later, however, on 2 November, while they were making final arrangements to leave in Calcutta the delegation received another telegram from Lhasa, dated 31 October, which reversed the instruction that they should go to Peking. It said: "Since we started peaceful discussions with the Chinese and the Chinese have invaded our territory, therefore we should postpone your trip to Peking to continue negotiations. This was the demand of the Tibetan National Assembly so therefore you should not yet proceed. We will let you know when you can leave."[17]

The next day, the delegation was informed by cable that their departure to China had been indefinitely postponed. The cable said that a divine lottery conducted in Norbulinga determined that the mission should not be sent to Peking. Shakabpa duly informed the Chinese in Calcutta and Delhi that they could not leave as planned and that he

15. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 426–27.
16. Ibid.: 426–28.
17. Ibid.: 429.

would inform them of a new date later. As will be seen below, the real reason for this sudden shift was that the Tibetan government had decided to appeal to the United Nations and did not want a delegation waiting in Peking while the United Nations was considering their appeal.[18]

In the United States, news of the invasion sparked further interest in assisting Tibet. On 1 November, Secretary of State Dean Acheson told a news conference that the United States would view seriously any new evidence of Communist aggression in Tibet.[19] More important, the United States tried to interest the Indian government in cooperating closely with them to forestall a Chinese conquest of Tibet.[20]

On 30 October, Ambassador Henderson had a conversation with G. S. Bajpai of the Indian Foreign Office in which he asked whether India would favor U.S. assistance for Tibet:

> 4. I asked Bajpai what in his opinion US could do at this time that would be most helpful. We wanted to do what we could; on other hand we realized tremendous responsibility which rested on India and did not wish to do anything which might render India's efforts less likely to succeed. Bajpai said that for time being he thought it would be preferable for US to take no action which might give Communist China a chance to renew its charges that great powers were unduly interested in Tibet or which might make it appear to Indian leaders that US was endeavoring use Peiping offensive in Tibet in order create rift between Communist China and India. If rift should come, he pointed out, it should clearly come through force of events and not with help of outside powers.[21]

On 2 November, Henderson discussed Tibet with Nehru and reported:

18. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976: 429–30.
19. U.S. Foreign Relations, 1950, volume 6, p. 555.
20. USFR, 793B.00/10–2750, telegram from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. ambassador in India, dated 27 October 1950. G. S. Bajpai was the senior Indian official in the Foreign Office under Nehru, who was both prime minister and foreign minister. S. Dutt, the Indian Commonwealth secretary in the Foreign Office at this time, says of Bajpai: "Bajpai was the principal official advisor of the Prime Minister on both Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. . . . Nehru found in him an able aide and depended a good deal on his advice" (Dutt 1977: 24).
21. USFR, 693.93B/10–3150, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 31 October 1950.

> He [Nehru] said he has personally been deeply disappointed in decision Peking, in spite of its knowledge of Indian sensibilities re Tibet, to launch invasion at time Tibet mission was preparing depart for China for conversations. He believed that friendly relations between China and India were in interests of Asian and world peace. He was concerned at attitude on part Peking which invasion reflected. This attitude, if adhered to, might result in considerable friction in future.
>
> 2. I did not think it would be wise at this juncture to say anything which he might construe as attempt to drive any deeper wedge between India and China. I therefore referred to recent statements made in Washington re Tibet and said that US Government also deeply regretted Peking's action. It agreed with India that this action was not in interests of peace. We realized that in view of geographic and historic factors main burden of Tibet problem rested on India. US did not want to say or do anything which would increase this burden; on contrary we desired to do what we could to help. What suggestions, if any, did he have to offer as to what we might do or should not do at this juncture?
>
> 3. Nehru said he thought US could be most helpful by doing nothing and saying little just now. Series of announcements by US Government condemning China or supporting Tibet might lend certain amount credence to Peking's charges that great powers had been intriguing in Tibet and had been exercising influence over India's Tibet policies. He had seen reports that Chinese Nationalist Government was planning to present matter Tibet to UN. US could be of service in his opinion if it could prevail on Chinese Nationalist not to do so. Motives of Formosa in this regard would be suspect. Furthermore among charges made by Peking was that Chinese Nationalists had been active in Tibet. Presentation of matter by Formosa would give fresh ammunition to Peking.[22]

After this exchange, the United States did nothing until the Tibetan appeal reached the United Nations.

THE DALAI LAMA ASSUMES POWER

The pressures for a transfer of power from the regent to the Dalai Lama came to a head when the two main state oracles, Nechung and

22. USFR, 793B.00/11–350, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 3 November 1950.

Gadong, were invited to advise the government about the current dangers. This Oracle session, attended by the regent, the Dalai Lama, the shapes, and other leading officials and abbots, began with the senior truniychemmo, Cawtang, informing both deities that the government wanted their prophetic advice on what action Tibet should take to insure that its dual religious/temporal form of government not be lost. Nechung replied unintelligibly, "If you don't make good offerings I cannot protect the welfare of religion and the people." Gadong then possessed his medium but he did not say much either. Just as he was about to leave the medium's body, however, the trunyichemmo Cawtang went over to him and said (paraphrased): "While we [humans] are dull and stupid, you are the one who has brilliant wisdom and knowledge of things. You also have the special responsibility for Buddhism in general and Tibet in particular. You should not be behaving like an ordinary human being so give us a proper prophecy so we will know what to do in the future."[23] Gadong immediately started dancing (in trance) as in a monk's religious dance, and when he was directly in front of the Dalai Lama he prostrated three times; on his knees and with tears streaming from his eyes, he said, "The responsibility for both the spiritual and the temporal should be taken by Thowang Thönden [the Dalai Lama]. This will benefit all Tibet, both Buddhism and the people. But you should request the Maharaja [which referred to Nechung]."[24] Nechung was immediately recalled and asked about the Dalai Lama taking power. This time he cryptically supported Gadong, responding, "I have already said this before."[25] Taktra said nothing about either prophecy and the oracle session ended.

At the time Nechung's reference to having already said that the Dalai Lama should take power was not understood, but since a record of all the oracle's statements and prophecies was kept, they were consulted. Every month, one shape had to go to Nechung for an official trance audience. In that year (1950), on one occasion attended by the monk-

23. Lha'u rta ra ([Lhautara] 1982: 97) reports that it was Chömpel Thubten who said this but the late Talama Cawtang himself told Gelek ([Rimpoche], interview) that it was he who intervened, and this was confirmed by the Dalai Lama (interview) and many other participants.
24. Ibid.
25. Khe smad (Kheme) 1982: 109.

shape Ramba, Nechung is supposed to have said that the Dalai Lama should take over the government; this was apparently not noticed or understood, since the oracle's comments are often difficult to comprehend.[26] In any case, Tibet's two leading state oracles had now agreed that Taktra should transfer complete authority to the 14th Dalai Lama, so Taktra had no real option but to resign, which he did about ten days later (in early November), saying, "During this time of trouble, which is like dust in the eye [painful], it is very sad for me to resign. However, since it is the prophecy of the two oracles, I have to resign and let the Dalai Lama take temporal and spiritual responsibilities."[27]

In order to forestall the possibility that the Dalai Lama would not agree to assume power, the monk-shape Ramba and Cawtang are said to have advised the Dalai Lama that when the Kashag asked whether he agreed to Taktra's resignation, he should suggest they consult the National Assembly, which was certain to recommend that the Dalai Lama take power.[28] The Dalai Lama later wrote of this meeting:

> This filled me with anxiety. I was only sixteen. I was far from having finished my religious education. I knew nothing about the world and had no experience of politics, and yet I was old enough to know how ignorant I was and how much I still had to learn. I protested at first that I was too young, for eighteen was the accepted age . . . yet I understood why the oracles and lamas had caused the request to be made. The long years of Regency after the death of each Dalai Lama were an inevitable weakness in our system of government. During my own minority, there had been dissensions between separate factions in our government, and the administration of the country had deteriorated. We had reached a state in which most people were anxious to avoid responsibility, rather

26. Ibid. One not unlikely possibility is that one or more key officials in favor of the Dalai Lama taking over from Taktra knew this and manipulated the convening of the oracle session with the expectation that Nechung or Gadong would suggest this change. When they did not, Cawtang made a desperate attempt to prompt Gadong to act. No Tibetan official would confirm this interpretation, although many indicated that key officials wanted to get the regent to resign in favor of the Dalai Lama. A few cryptically hinted that a conscious effort was made to produce a shift in power. Cawtang was later questioned by the government about what he had done and said at the ceremony. He replied that there was a precedent for his action and that the Yigtsang Office can insist that oracles speak clearly. He argued that he was only following this tradition. (Cawtang's comments derive from Shingsa Awala, interview.)

27. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 96–98.

28. Pandenla, interview.

> than accept it. Yet now, under the threat of invasion, we were more in need of unity than ever before, and I, as Dalai Lama, was the only person whom everybody in the country would unanimously follow.[29]

The Kashag then convened the National Assembly and explained the prophecies of Nechung and Gadong and the resignation of Taktra as regent. The assembly was told that they should recommend whether or not the Dalai Lama should take over the reins of government. They immediately declared in favor of the Dalai Lama assuming power and drew up and presented a request to this effect. The Dalai Lama accepted the request on 17 November 1950.

TIBET APPEALS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

The Dalai Lama's accession to power represented a victory for the faction that felt it was too early to compromise Tibet's hard-won de facto independence by accepting any of the conditions demanded by the Chinese ambassador. These officials, led by Phala and Surkhang, felt another attempt should be made to secure outside support, particularly from the United Nations.

Surkhang Shape followed world news closely and knew that only months earlier, the United Nations Organization had come to the rescue of Korea, and that Chinese troops ("volunteers") had just crossed the Yalu River. In the third week of October, the Tibetans discussed with the Indian government the possibility that the United Nations would come to Tibet's aid, but were advised that China might regard their appeal to the United Nations as further provocation. Not to be dissuaded, on 29 October Tibet asked India directly if it would bring a Tibetan appeal before the United Nations. India responded that Tibet itself must appeal but that India would support the appeal on the grounds that the Chinese should not have used force but should have

29. Dalai Lama 1983: 83. In an interview in 1984, the Dalai Lama could not confirm that he suggested that the assembly be consulted, saying only that he might have but he was not sure (Dalai Lama, interview).

continued peaceful negotiations.[30] This was, of course, the weakest support India could have offered and fell far below the obligation it inherited from the British through the Simla Convention of 1914.

Despite this disappointing response, on 3 November Tibet informed the Indian government that it would appeal directly to the United Nations and to other Buddhist nations of South Asia (apparently meaning Ceylon and Burma).[31] At the same time, as was mentioned earlier, the government instructed Shakabpa not to proceed to Peking from India but instead to send the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations. Shakabpa, on the verge of leaving to negotiate with the Chinese in Peking, was shocked and initially incredulous. He immediately went to Gangtok in Sikkim, where he confirmed the order directly with the Kashag by wireless phone.[32] He then returned to Kalimpong and forwarded the appeal to the secretary-general of the United Nations on 7 November.[33] This appeal, which arrived at the United Nations on 13 November, effectively presented the Tibetan government's view of their historical relationship with China and of events from 1911 to the present:

Appeal to Secretary General of the United Nations

> The attention of the world is riveted on Korea where aggression is being resisted by an international force. Similar happenings in remote Tibet are passing without notice. It is in the belief that aggression will not go unchecked and freedom unprotected in any part of the world that we have assumed the responsibility of reporting through you recent happenings in the border area of Tibet to the United Nations Organization. As you are aware the problem of Tibet has taken on alarming proportions in recent times. The problem is not of Tibet's own making but is largely the outcome of unthwarted Chinese ambition to bring weaker nations on her periphery within her active domination. Tibetans have for long lived a cloistered life in their mountain fastness remote and aloof from

30. F0371/84457, report of conversation with G. S. Bajpai cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 5 November 1950.

31. Ibid.

32. Shakabpa, interview.

33. The British high commissioner informed London that he had been told in strict confidence that the Tibetan appeal had been drafted by Sinha, the Indian representative stationed in Lhasa (F0371/84454, the United Kingdom high commissioner to Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 16 November 1950). Shakabpa (interview) confirms this.

the rest of the world except insofar as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as the acknowledged head of the Buddhist Church, confers benediction and receives homages from followers in many countries. In the years preceding 1912 there were indeed close friendly relations of a personal nature between the Emperor of China and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The connection was essentially born of belief in a common faith and may correctly be described as the relationship between a spiritual guide and his lay followers; it had no political implications. As a people devoted to the tenets of Buddhism, Tibetans had long eschewed the art of warfare, practiced peace and tolerance, and for the defence of their country relied on its geographical configuration and in non-involvement in the affairs of other nations. There were times when Tibet sought but seldom received the protection of the Chinese Emperor. The Chinese, however, in their natural urge for expansion, have wholly misconstrued the significance of the time of friendship and inter-independence that existed between China and Tibet as neighbors. To them, China was suzerain and Tibet a vassal state. It is this which first aroused legitimate apprehension in the mind of Tibet regarding the designs of China on her independent status.

Chinese conduct during their expedition in 1910 completed the rupture between the two countries. In 1911–12, when Tibet under the thirteenth Dalai Lama declared her complete independence [—] even as Nepal simultaneously broke away from allegiance to China [—] the Chinese revolution in 1911 which dethroned the last Manchurian emperor snapped the last of the sentimental and religious bonds that Tibet had with China. Tibet thereafter depended entirely on her isolation, her faith in the wisdom of Lord Buddha, and occasionally on the support of the British in India for her protection. No doubt in those circumstances the latter could also claim suzerainty over Tibet. Tibet, notwithstanding Anglo-Chinese influence from time to time, maintained her separated existence, in justification of which it may be pointed out that she has been able to keep peace and order within the country and remain at peace with the world. She continued to maintain neighbourly goodwill and friendship with the people of China but never acceded to the Chinese claim of suzerainty in 1914. It was British persuasion which led Tibet to sign a treaty which superimposed on her the nominal (non-interfering) suzerainty of China and by which the Chinese were accorded the right to maintain a mission in Lhasa though they were strictly forbidden to meddle in the internal affairs of Tibet. Apart from that fact even the

nominal suzerainty which Tibet conceded to China is not enforceable because of the non-signature of the treaty of 1914 by the Chinese. It will be seen that Tibet maintained independent relations with other neighboring countries like India and Nepal. Furthermore, despite friendly British overtures, she did not compromise her position by throwing in her forces in world war two on the side of China. Thus she asserted and maintained her complete independence. The treaty of 1914 still guides relations between Tibet and India, and the Chinese, not being a party to it, may be taken to have renounced the benefits that would have otherwise accrued to them from the treaty. Tibet's independence thereby reassumed *de jure* status.

The slender tie that Tibet maintained with China after the 1911 revolution became less justified when China underwent a further revolution and turned into a full-fledged Communist state. There can be no kinship or sympathy between such divergent creeds as those espoused by China and Tibet.

Forseeing future complications, the Tibetan Government broke off diplomatic relations with China and made a Chinese representative in Lhasa depart from Tibet in July, 1949. Since then, Tibet has not even maintained formal relations with the Chinese Government and people. They desire to live apart uncontaminated by the germ of a highly materialistic creed, but the Chinese are bent on not allowing Tibet to live in peace. They have, since the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic, hurled threats of liberating Tibet and have used devious methods to intimidate and undermine the Government of Tibet.

Tibet recognises that she is in no position to resist. It is thus that she agreed to negotiate on friendly terms with the Chinese Government. It is unfortunate that the Tibetan Mission to China were unable to leave India, through no fault of their own but for want of British visas which were required for transit through Hong Kong. At the kind intervention of the Government of India the Chinese Peoples Republic condescended to allow the Tibet Mission to have preliminary negotiation with the Chinese Ambassador to India who arrived in New Delhi only in September. While these negotiations were proceeding in Delhi, Chinese troops, without warning or provocation, crossed the Dre Chu [Upper Yangtse] River, which has for long been the boundary into Tibetan territory, at a number of places on 7th October, 1950. In quick succession places of strategic importance like Demar, Kamto, Tunga, Tshame, Rimochegotyu, Yakalo, and Markham fell to the Chinese. Tibetan frontier garrisons

in Kham, which were maintained not with any aggressive design but as a nominal protective measure, have all been wiped out. Communist troops in great force converged from five direction on Chamdo, the capital of Kham, which succumbed soon after. Nothing is known of the state of a Minister of the Tibetan Government posted there. Little is known in the outside world of this sneak invasion. Long after the invasion had taken place the Chinese announced to the world that they had asked their armies to march into Tibet.

This unwarranted act of aggression has not only disturbed the peace of Tibet[,] it is in complete disregard of a solemn assurance given by the Chinese to the Government of India. It has created a grave situation in Tibet and may eventually deprive Tibet of her long cherished independence. We can assure you, Mr. Secretary-General, that Tibet will not go down without a fight, though there is little hope of a nation dedicated to peace resisting the brutal effort of men trained to war, but we understand the United Nations have decided to stop aggression whenever it takes place.

The armed invasion of Tibet for the incorporation of Tibet within the fold of Chinese Communism through sheer physical force is a clear case of aggression.

As long as the people of Tibet are compelled by force to become a part of China against the will and consent of her people, the present invasion of Tibet will be the grossest instance of the violation of the weak by the strong. We therefore appeal through you to the nations of the world to intercede in our behalf and restrain Chinese aggression.

The problem is simple. The Chinese claim Tibet as part of China. Tibetans feel that, racially, culturally, and geographically, they are far apart from the Chinese. If the Chinese find the reactions of the Tibetans to their unnatural claim not acceptable, there are other civilised methods by which they could ascertain the views of the people of Tibet, or should (settle) the issue (by) purely judicial (means). They are open to seek redress in an international court of law. The conquest of Tibet by China will only enlarge the area of conflict and increase the threat to the independence and stability of other Asian countries.

We Ministers, with the approval of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, entrust the problem of Tibet in this emergency to the ultimate decision of the United Nations and hope that the conscience of the world would not allow the disruption of our state by methods reminiscent of the jungle. The Kashad [*sic:* Kashag] (The Tibetan Cabinet) and the Na-

tional Assembly of Tibet. Dated Lhasa the 27th day of the 9th Tibetan month of the Iron Tiger year, seventh November, 1950. Tibetan delegation Shakabpa (house Kalimpong) [Ends].

2. Words in brackets [parentheses] appeared in New York Times version and fill obvious blanks in copy supplied by Secretariat.[34]

The United Nations Secretariat immediately ruled that because Tibet was not a member of the United Nations and because the telegram was from a delegation outside Tibet rather than from the Tibetan government itself, they would simply record in its routine list of communications from nongovernmental organizations the fact that such a communiqué had been received. However, they did informally pass out copies of the appeal to delegations on the Security Council. The Secretariat also said that the Tibetan telegram would not be issued as a Security Council document unless a member of the Security Council requested that it be so issued or unless a member of the United Nations asked for the subject to be placed on the council's agenda.[35] Both Britain and India could easily have clarified this mistaken interpretation concerning the "nongovernmental" origin of the appeals, since they knew that the Tibetan government sent official messages from Kalimpong due to communications limitations in Tibet. Neither chose to do so.

The Tibetan government, again through Shakabpa, also asked Britain, Canada, and the United States to support their appeal. The letter sent to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India said:

> According to the information received by wireless from the Government of Tibet the Chinese Communists have made sudden invasion into Tibet from number of different places in Eastern Tibet on 17th October, 1950 while negotiations were proceeding in Delhi. Now the Cabinet [Kashag] and the National Assembly of Tibet have appealed to the United Nations for ultimate judgment of this treacherous action by the Peking Government, a copy of which is enclosed herewith for your information. Tibet being a religious country is naturally weak in political and military activities. Thus we request Your Excellency to approach your Government for

34. F0371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom's U.N. delegation to the British Foreign Office, dated 14 November 1950.
35. F0371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom's U.N. delegation to the British Foreign Office, dated 13 November 1950.

> effective support in the United Nations so that the peace-loving religious country may be saved from destruction of war. Your kind advice and acknowledgment will be greatly appreciated.[36]

The letter sent to the United States was similar:

> According information received by wireless from Government of Tibet, Chinese Communists have made sudden invasion into Tibet while negotiation was proceeding Delhi. Now Cabinet [Kashag] and National Assembly of Tibet have appealed UN for ultimate judgment this treacherous act by Peking Government, copy of which enclosed herewith your information.
>
> Tibet being religious country is naturally weak in political and military activities, thus we request Your Excellency approach your Government for effective support in UN so that peace-loving religious country may be saved from destruction of war.
>
> Your kind advice and acknowledgement will be greatly appreciated. (Signed) Tshchag and Tsepon Shakabpa (Tibetan delegations).[37]

Tibet found support for its appeal from a most unlikely source—El Salvador. On 14 November, Hector David Castro, the chairman of El Salvador's delegation, telegraphed the U.N. secretary-general requesting that the "invasion of Tibet by foreign forces" be added to the agenda of the present section based on the United Nation's primary responsibility "to maintain international peace and security" as cited in paragraph 1 of Article 1 of the United Nations Charter. El Salvador had hoped that this issue could be brought directly before the General Assembly, but the Secretariat instead ordered that the issue first be brought up before the General Committee for a discussion of whether it should be referred to the General Assembly.[38]

36. FO371/84454, letter sent by Shakapba, dated 12 November, to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 16 November 1950.

37. USFR, 793B.00/1–1550, cited in a telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 15 November 1950.

38. United Nations Document A/1534, cited in Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama n.d. The motivation behind the El Salvador move is unclear.

The draft resolution proposed by El Salvador asked not only for condemnation of the Chinese but also for creation of a special committee to develop proposals for the United Nations regarding actions that could be taken:

> The General Assembly,
> Taking note that the peaceful nation of Tibet has been invaded, without any provocation on its part, by foreign forces proceeding from the territory controlled by the Government established at Peking.
> Decides,
> 1. To condemn this act of unprovoked aggression against Tibet;
> 2. To establish a Committee composed of (names of nations) which will be entrusted with the study of the appropriate measures that could be taken by the General Assembly on this matter;
> 3. To instruct the Committee to undertake that study with special reference made to the United Nations by the Government of Tibet, and to render its report to the General Assembly, as early as possible, during the present session.[39]

These events—the invasion of Tibet in October, the Tibetan government's appeal to the United Nations in November, and El Salvador's action on behalf of Tibet—forced India, Britain, and the United States to weigh their own national interests carefully against their historical connections with Tibet and their moral and legal obligation to assist her at this critical time.

BRITISH AND INDIAN REACTIONS TO TIBET'S APPEAL

The British Foreign Office found it difficult to establish a course of action with regard to Tibet's appeal to the United Nations. They began by examining Tibet's eligibility to appeal in the light of Article 35, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter, which stipulated that the ap-

39. Ibid.

pealing party must be a "state."[40] At question was whether Tibet could qualify as a state. The British Foreign Office's legal examination concluded that it could easily be argued that Chinese suzerainty was so amorphous and symbolic that it did not preclude Tibet's having its own international identity. The reasoning supporting this position was stated in a telegram from the Foreign Office to the British high commissioner in India:

> The actual control which China in virtue of her suzerainty exercised over Tibet varies at different times. In 1911 Tibet threw off Chinese control and expelled all Chinese troops from her territory. By 1913 she had established independence of China and she participated in a tripartite Conference in Simla in 1914 in her own right. As a result of this Conference representatives of Britain, China and Tibet drew up a Convention recognising Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty but expressly precluding China from incorporating Tibet as a Chinese province or from sending troops into Tibet other than an escort of 300 men for the representative in Lhasa. It was made plain by this Convention that Tibet was entitled to conduct foreign relations directly and not through China. The Convention was signed by Britain and Tibet but only initialled by China. The Chinese Government subsequently repudiated the initialling of the Convention by their representative but on occasion they have stated that they accept the terms of the Convention apart from the clauses fixing the boundary between China and Tibet. Though China did not sign the Convention, it was only on the faith of the conditions in it that Tibet agreed to accept Chinese suzerainty again. If, therefore, China repudiated the Convention in its entirely, as her present actions clearly show she has done, she has no right whatever over Tibet, not even to a nominal suzerainty. Since 1913 Tibet has not only enjoyed full control over her internal affairs but also has maintained direct relations with other states. She must therefore be regarded as a state to which Article 35 (2) of the Charter applies.
>
> 2. It is important to stress that the right enjoyed by Tibet to engage in foreign relations on her own account distinguishes her case from, for

40. Article 35 said: "A State which is not a member of the United Nations may bring to the attention of the Security Council or the General Assembly any dispute to which it is a party if it accepts in advance, for the purposes of the dispute, the obligations of pacific settlement provided in the present Charter" (FO371/84454, given in a letter from the British Foreign Office to the attorney-general, dated 25 November 1950).

> example, that of British protected states with internal autonomy but no right to engage in foreign relations.
>
> 3. Our recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet after 1914 was conditional on the recognition by China of Tibetan autonomy; in other words the suzerainty which we recognised was of the nominal kind envisaged in the Simla Convention, and we have since 1914 accepted the right of Tibet to enter into direct relations with other states.[41]

The Foreign Office also examined the meaning of *suzerainty* and, in particular, the status of any vassal state or territory that was subordinate to a suzerain. It concluded that such divergent situations were lumped under this rubric that the status of a vassal state under a suzerain depended in a large measure on the facts of the specific case. Two factors in particular were critical: first, whether all international treaties concluded by the suzerain state are ipso facto concluded for the vassal; and, second, whether war of the suzerain is ipso facto war of the vassal. On both these counts the research division of the Foreign Office concluded that all the evidence showed that Tibet was not merely a portion of China but, rather, had a clear international identity of her own.[42]

Based on these briefs, the British Foreign Office decided that Tibet had the right to bring her case before the United Nations and, on 10 November—three days before the Tibetan appeal even reached New York—sent the following telegram to the British high commissioner in India and the British United Nations delegation in New York:

> We are considering what attitude to adopt should the Tibetan appeal come up in the United Nations. We are already committed in a general way to India's support and this will doubtless extend to [the] line she adopts at Lake Success. *Though we fully acknowledge preponderance of Indian interests in this matter and recognise that initiative must lie with her,* we consider it of utmost importance to have a preliminary exchange of views with her on account of grave implications of discussion of Tibetan issue in United Nations on our relations with China.
>
> 2. For your personal information we view present situation on following lines:

41. FO371/84454, telegram from the British Foreign Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 9 November 1950.

42. FO371/84458, minute by R. H. Scott, Southeast Asia Department of the British Foreign Office, dated 2 November 1950.

(a) We consider that Tibetan autonomy is sufficiently well established for her to be regarded as a "state" within the meaning of the United Nations Charter. My immediately succeeding telegram gives our views on the legal aspect: these are also for your information only at this stage and not for communication to Government of India. Whether we shall be prepared to support this interpretation of Tibet's international status in the course of preliminary debate in United Nations on validity of her appeal remains for decision. Assuming that India takes this attitude we should be prepared to do so too, though the implications are far reaching.

(b) If this view of Tibet's status is conceded and validity of her appeal is upheld in debate, it follows that Chinese action constitutes aggression against Tibet, and in the Security Council which would presumably follow two obvious possibilities would present themselves:

(i) the Council might content itself with a condemnation of the Chinese action;

(ii) it might call on China to withdraw her forces from Tibet and to restore the *status quo*.

(c) We should hope that Security Council action would be restricted to (i) above. We should particularly wish to avoid action on lines of (ii) above, which would at best be likely to lead to a resolution which China would defy and which could only be enforced by armed action which neither we, nor we assume India or anyone else, e.g., the United States, would be prepared to take. In the result the United Nations would lose prestige.[43]

The British Foreign Office at this stage, then, wanted to support Tibet in some fashion and to prevent China's aggression from going completely unnoticed, but they did not want to go counter to the policy of the Indian government, whom they now considered had the primary responsibility for Tibet,[44] and they did not want the United Nations to pass resolutions it could not enforce.

43. FO371/84454, telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office in London to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 10 November 1950 (emphasis added).

44. In some ways, the Indian government resented Britain acting as if it no longer had interests in the area. India conveyed this resentment to the British Foreign Office in their answer to Britain's request for India's opinion on the following draft response, which the British wanted to use in a Parliamentary Question about whether Britain would press for the inclusion of the Tibetan problem in the Securiy Council: "The situ-

The British delegation to the United Nations felt that the position presented in the telegram was too strong. The head of the delegation, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, argued that whatever opinion might be held about the Chinese aggression, the reality was that no one could possibly give effective aid to Tibet. He argued that the Indians themselves had doubts about Tibet's status as a state and that Britain should therefore modify its views on the matter. He recommended, as the best line to take in the United Nations, to argue that the Tibetan issue was wrapped in legal obscurity. This was conveyed in a telegram to the Foreign Office sent from New York on 14 November 1950:

> Since Indian Government themselves seem to have strong doubts regarding the "absolute independence" of Tibet, I feel that we should do well to modify our own legal views on this subject. If indeed we are to argue that Tibet is fully independent, there seems no doubt that an act of aggression has occurred and in these circumstances there might be strong pressure brought on us to support some far reaching resolution in the Security Council and when that is vetoed, transfer the whole matter to the General Assembly under the terms of the recent resolution "Uniting for Peace."
>
> 2. I greatly hope therefore that I shall be instructed, when and if the Indians raise this matter in the Security Council, to argue to the general effect that the legal situation is extremely obscure and that in any case Tibet cannot be considered as a fully independent country.[45]

This response prompted the Foreign Office to ask the British attorney-general for a ruling on Tibet's international status. It also led to an attempt to ascertain more clearly the policy of the Indian government

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ation in Tibet is one which primarily concerns the Government of India and for this reason we would not ourselves wish to take the initiative. We are however in close consultation with the Government of India on this matter" (FO371/84454, the Commonwealth Relations Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 11 November 1950). The Indian government informed Britain that they preferred the first sentence of the statement to read, "The situation in Tibet is one which primarily concerns the Government of India *although His Majesty's Government are also interested.*" The reason they gave for this was that they were worried that the statement in the original British draft suggested that the initiative lay completely with India. (FO371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 13 November 1950.) (Emphasis added.)

45. FO371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom delegation in New York to the British Foreign Office, dated 14 November 1950.

toward the Tibetan appeal, since their views were considered primary to those of Britain.

INDIA'S RESPONSE TO THE CHINESE INVASION

Although India had decided that friendship with China outweighed obligations inherited from Britain regarding Tibet, it had been unwilling to back openly China's claim of sovereignty. India had addressed this dilemma by creating conditions that would compel Tibet to accede to China's terms. News of the Chinese invasion therefore came as a shock to Delhi, which responded by sending a note of protest to the Chinese government on 21 October:

> The Central People's Government are fully aware of the views of the Government of India on the adjustment of Sino-Tibetan relations. It is, therefore, not necessary to repeat that their interest is solely in a peaceful settlement of the Issue. My government are also aware that the Central People's Government have been following a policy of negotiations with the Tibetan authorities. It has, however, been reported that some military action has taken place or is about to take place, which may affect the peaceful outcome of these negotiations.
>
> The Government of India would desire to point out that a military action at the present time against Tibet will give those countries in the world which are unfriendly to China a handle for anti-Chinese propaganda at a crucial and delicate juncture in international affairs. The Central People's Government must be aware that opinion in the United Nations has been steadily veering round to the admission of China into that organisation before the close of the present session. The Government of India feel that military action on the eve of a decision by the (General) Assembly will have serious consequences and will give powerful support to those who are opposed to the admission of the People's Government to the United Nations and the Security Council.
>
> At the present time when the international situation is so delicate, any move that is likely to be interpreted as a disturbance of the peace may prejudice the position of China in the eyes of the world. The Government of India's firm conviction is that one of the principal conditions for the restoration of a peaceful atmosphere is the recognition of the position of the People's Republic of China, and its association with the work

> of the U.N. They feel that an incautious move at the present time even in a matter which is within its own sphere will be used by those who are unfriendly to China to prejudice China's case in the U.N. and generally before neutral opinion. The Government of India attach the highest importance to the earliest settlement of the problem of Chinese representation in international organizations and have been doing everything in their power to bring it to a successful conclusion. They are convinced that the position of China will be weakened if through military action in Tibet those who are opposed to China's admission are now given a chance to misrepresent China's peaceful aims.
>
> The Government of India feel that the time factor is extremely important. In Tibet there is not likely to be any serious military opposition and any delay in settling the matter will not therefore affect Chinese interests, or a suitable final solution. The Government of India's interest in this matter is, as we have explained before, only to see that the admission of the People's Government to the U.N. is not again postponed due to the causes which could be avoided and further that, if possible, a peaceful solution is sought while military action may cause unrest and disturbance on her own borders.[46]

This protest is interesting in that it does not in any way indicate that China does not have the right to invade and militarily to incorporate Tibet, but instead focuses on China's admission to the United Nations. The letter accepts the Chinese position that Tibet is "a matter which is within its own sphere" and ignores the Indo-Tibetan Agreements of 1914 through which India held rights regarding Tibet's status.[47]

India received no response to this communication, so on 26 October, one day after the Chinese publicly announced that their troops had liberated Chamdo, it sent another, somewhat stronger, note. This letter stated that because China had given assurances that its intentions were peaceful and that negotiations in good faith were going on between Tibet and China, the advance of China's troops into Tibet appeared "most surprising and regrettable." It also said India deplored the invasion, but negated the force of this by saying that her advice to China had been "friendly and disinterested." The note read:

46. Carlyle 1953: 550–51.
47. Jain 1960: 45–46.

We have seen with great regret reports in newspapers of official statements made in Peking to the effect that "People's Army units have been ordered to advance into Tibet."

We have received no intimation of it from your ambassador here or from our ambassador in Peking.

We have been repeatedly assured of the desire of Chinese Government to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means and negotiations. In an interview which India's ambassador had recently with the Vice-Foreign Minister, the latter, while reiterating the resolve of the Chinese Government to "liberate" Tibet, had expressed a continued desire to do so by peaceful means.

We informed the Chinese Government through our ambassador of the decision of the Tibetan delegation to proceed to Peking immediately to start negotiations. This delegation actually left Delhi yesterday (25th). In view of these facts, the decision to order an advance of China's troops into Tibet appears to us most surprising and regrettable.

We realise there has been a delay in the Tibetan delegation proceeding to Peking. This delay was caused in the first instance by the inability to obtain visas for Hong Kong, for which the delegation was in no way responsible. Subsequently, the delegation came back to Delhi because of the wishes of the Chinese Government that preliminary negotiations should first be conducted in Delhi with the Chinese ambassador.

Owing to lack of knowledge on the part of the Tibetan delegation of dealing with other countries and the necessity of obtaining instructions from their government, who in turn had to consult their assemblies, certain further delay took place.

The Government of India do not believe any foreign influence hostile to China has been responsible for the delay in the delegation's departure.

Two. Now that the invasion of Tibet has been ordered by the Chinese Government, peaceful negotiations can hardly be synchronised with it and there will naturally be fear on the part of the Tibetans that negotiations will be under duress.

In the present context of world events, the invasion by Chinese troops of Tibet cannot but be regarded as deplorable and, in the considered judgment of the Government of India, not in the interest of China or of peace.

The Government of India can only express their deep regret that in spite of the friendly and disinterested advice repeatedly tendered by them, the Chinese Government should have decided to seek a solution

> of the problem of their relations with Tibet by force instead [of] by the slower and more enduring method of peaceful approach. [Signed] K. M. Panikkar[48]

Two days later, China responded in a most disparaging and unequivocal manner, stating that Tibet was a part of China and that whatever China did there was an internal matter, of concern to no foreign country. It went on to insult Nehru and India by charging that India had been "affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet." It was a strong statement, especially in contrast to the Indian notes:

> The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China would like to make it clear:
>
> Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory and the problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people, and defend the frontiers of China. This is the resolved policy of the Central People's Government.
>
> The Central People's Government has repeatedly expressed the hope that the problem of Tibet may be solved by peaceful negotiations, and it welcomes, therefore, the declaration of the local authorities of Tibet to come to Peking at an early date to proceed with peaceful negotiations.
>
> Yet, the Tibetan delegation, under outside instigation, has intentionally delayed the date of its departure for Peking. The Central People's Government, however, has not abandoned its desire to proceed with peaceful negotiations.
>
> But regardless of whether the local authorities of Tibet wish to proceed with peaceful negotiations, and whatever results may be achieved by negotiations, the problem of Tibet is a domestic problem of the People's Republic of China and no foreign interference shall be tolerated.
>
> In particular, the problem of Tibet and the problem of the participation of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations are two entirely unrelated problems.
>
> If those countries hostile to China attempt to utilise as an excuse the fact that the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China is exercising its sovereign rights in its territory of Tibet and threaten to obstruct the participation of the People's Republic of China

48. International Commission of Jurists 1959: 132–33.

in the UN Organization, it is then but another demonstration of the unfriendly and hostile attitude of such countries toward China.

Therefore, with regard to the viewpoint of the Government of India on what it regards as deplorable, the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China cannot but consider it as having been affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet and hence express their deep regret.[49]

Stung by this insulting note, the Indian government made its strongest response. In this third note, India openly articulated the cause of Tibetan autonomy (within the context of Chinese suzerainty), arguing that this was not unwarranted interference in Chinese internal affairs "but well-meant advice by a friendly government which has a natural interest in the solution of the problems concerning its neighbors by peaceful means." India, however, still unilaterally relinquished its traditional rights regarding Tibet. India wanted to maintain its Missions in Tibet as well as the McMahon border delimitation; strangely, however, it felt that the best way to accomplish this end was by renouncing the very legal rights on which these were based:

The Indian Ambassador in Peking has transmitted to the Government of India the note handed to him by the vice-foreign minister of the People's Republic of China on October 30. The Government of India have read with amazement the statement in the last paragraph of the Chinese Government's reply that the Government of India's representative to them was affected by foreign influences hostile to China and categorically repudiate it.

At no time has any foreign influence been brought to bear upon India in regard to Tibet. In this, as in other matters, the Government of India's policy has been entirely independent and directed solely towards a peaceful settlement of international disputes and avoidance of anything calculated to increase the present deplorable tensions in the world.

Two. The Government of China are really mistaken in thinking that the Tibetan delegation's departure to Peking was delayed by outside instigation. In their previous communications the Government of India have explained at some length the reasons why the Tibetan delegation could not proceed to Peking earlier. They are convinced that there has been no possibility of foreign instigation.

49. *Ibid.*: 133.

Three. It is with no desire to interfere or to gain any advantage that the Government of India have sought earnestly that a settlement of the Tibetan problem should be effected by peaceful negotiations, adjusting legitimate Tibetan claims to autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty. Tibetan autonomy is a fact, which, judging from reports which they have received from the Indian Ambassador in China and also from other sources, the Chinese Government were themselves willing to recognise and foster.

The Government of India's repeated suggestions that Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and Tibetan autonomy should be reconciled by peaceful negotiations were not, as the Chinese Government seem to suggest, unwarranted interference in China's internal affairs, but well-meant advice by a friendly government which has a natural interest in the solution of the problems concerning its neighbours by peaceful methods.

Four. Wedded as they are to ways of peace the Government of India have been gratified to learn that the Chinese Government were also desirous to effect a settlement in Tibet through peaceful negotiations. Because of this, the Government of India advised the Tibetan Government to send their delegation to Peking, and were glad that this advice was accepted. In the interchange of the communications which had taken place between the Government of India and the Government of China, the former received repeated assurances that a peaceful settlement was aimed at.

In the circumstances, the surprise of the Government of India was all the greater when they learnt that military operations had been undertaken by the Chinese Government against a peaceful people. There has been no allegation that there has been any provocation or any resort to non-peaceful methods on the part of the Tibetans. Hence, there is no justification whatever for such military operations against them. Such a step involving an attempt to impose a decision by force, could not possibly be reconciled with a peaceful settlement. In view of these developments, the Government of India are no longer in a position to advise the Tibetan delegation to proceed to Peking, unless the Chinese Government think it fit to order their troops to halt their advance into Tibet and thus give a chance for peaceful negotiations.

Five. Every step that the Government of India have taken in recent months has been to check the drift to war all over the world. In doing so, they have adhered to their policy regardless of the displeasure of great nations. They cannot help thinking early operations by the Chinese Government against Tibet have greatly added to the tensions of the world in

general, which they are sure the Government of China also wish to avoid.

Six. The Government of India have repeatedly made it clear that they have no political or territorial ambitions in Tibet and they do not seek any novel or privileged position for themselves or for their nationals in Tibet. At the same time they have pointed out that certain rights have grown out of usage and agreements which are natural between neighbors with close cultural and commercial relations.

These relations have found expression in the presence of an agent of the Government of India in Lhasa, the existence of trade agencies at Gyantse and Yatung and the maintenance of post and telegraph offices at the trade route up to Gyantse. For the protection of this trade route a small military escort has been stationed at Gyantse for over 40 years. The Government of India are anxious that these establishments which are to the mutual interests of India and Tibet, and do not detract in any way from Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, should continue. The personnel at the Lhasa mission and the agencies at Gyantse have accordingly been instructed to stay at their posts.

Seven. It has been the basic policy of the Government of India to work for friendly relations between India and China, both countries recognising each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and mutual interests.

Recent developments in Tibet have affected friendly relations and the interest of peace all over the world; this the Government of India deeply regret.

In conclusion, the Government of India can only express their earnest hope that the Chinese Government will still prefer the methods of peaceful negotiations and settlement to a solution under duress and by force.[50]

While this exchange was occurring, the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations reached Lake Success. India's reaction was particularly important because Britain (and to a lesser extent the United States and others) was committed to following India's lead. For several weeks, India did not arrive at an official response and tried to satisfy the British by making informal statements. For example, on 13 November, Bajpai reiterated that India would support the Tibetan appeal and said he hoped that support would be forthcoming from other powers on the

50. Ibid.: 133–35.

Security Council.[51] And again on 17 November, he told the British that the head of the Indian delegation to the United Nations had been instructed to make inquiries to see if some non-superpower would present the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations Security Council. Bajpai said, however, that if no other country would do so, he thought it more than probable that the Indian government would be prepared to act.[52]

By mid-November, the Chinese reply to the last Indian note arrived in New Delhi. Dated 16 November, it led India to decide not to support the Tibetan appeal:

> On November 1, 1950, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China received from H. E. Ambassador Panikkar a communication from the Government of the Republic of India on the problem of Tibet.
>
> The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China in its past communications with the Government of the Republic of India on the question of Tibet has repeatedly made it clear that Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory. The problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China. This is the firm policy of the Chinese Government. According to the provisions of the common programme adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the regional autonomy granted by the Chinese Government to the national minorities inside the country is autonomy within the confines of Chinese sovereignty.
>
> This point has been recognised by the Indian Government in its *aide mémoire* to the Chinese Government dated August 26, 1950. However, when the Chinese Government actually exercised its sovereign rights and began to liberate the Tibetan people and drive out foreign forces and influences to ensure that the Tibetan people will be free from aggression and will realise regional autonomy and religious freedom, the Indian Government attempted to influence and obstruct the exercise of its sovereign rights in Tibet by the Chinese Government. This cannot but make the Chinese Government greatly surprised.

51. F0371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 13 November 1950.
52. F0371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 17 November 1950.

The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China sincerely hopes that the Chinese People's Liberation Army may enter Tibet peacefully to perform the sacred task of liberating the Tibetan people and defending the frontiers of China. It has therefore long since welcomed the delegation of the local authorities of Tibet, which has remained in India, to come to Peking at an early date to proceed with peace negotiations. Yet the said delegation, obviously as a result of continued outside obstruction, has delayed its departure for Peking. Further, taking advantage of the delay of the negotiations, the local authorities of Tibet have deployed strong armed forces at Chengtu [Chamdo] in Sikang province in the interior of China, in an attempt to prevent the Chinese People's Liberation Army from liberating Tibet.

On August 31, 1950, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Indian Government through Ambassador Panikkar that the Chinese People's Liberation Army was going to take action soon in West Sikang according to set plans, and expressed the hope that the Indian Government would assist the delegation of the local authorities of Tibet so that it might arrive in Peking in mid-September. The Chinese Chargé d'Affaires, Shen Chien, and later Ambassador Yuan Chung-hsien, both in person, told the said delegation that it was imperative that it should hasten to Peking within September, or that the said delegation would bear the responsibilities and be held responsible for all the consequences resulting from the delay. In mid-October, the Chinese Ambassador Yuan again informed the Indian Government of this. Yet still owing to outside instigation the delegation of the local authorities of Tibet fabricated various pretexts and remained in India.

Although the Chinese Government has not given up its desire of settling the problem of Tibet peacefully it can no longer continue to put off the set plan of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to proceed to Tibet. And the liberation of Chengtu [Chamdo] further proved that through the instrument of Tibetan troops, foreign forces and influences were obstructing the peaceful settlement of the problem of Tibet. But regardless of whether the local authorities of Tibet wish to proceed with peace negotiations and regardless of whatever results may be achieved by negotiations, no foreign intervention will be permitted. The entry into Tibet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and the liberation of the Tibetan people are also decided.

In showing its friendship with the Government of the Republic of India, and in an understanding of the desire of the Indian Government

to see the problem of Tibet settled peacefully, the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China had kept the Indian Government informed of its efforts in this direction. What the Chinese Government cannot but deeply regret is that the Indian Government, in disregard of the facts, has regarded a domestic problem of the Chinese Government—the exercise of its sovereign rights in Tibet—as an international dispute calculated to increase the present tensions in the world.

The Government of the Republic of India has repeatedly expressed its desire of developing Sino-Indian friendship on the basis of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, and of preventing the world from going to war. The entry into Tibet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army is exactly aimed at the protection of the integrity of the territory and the sovereignty of China. And it is on this question that all those countries who desire to respect the territory and sovereignty of China should first of all indicate their real attitude towards China.

In the meantime, we consider that what is now threatening the independence of nations and world peace is precisely the forces of these imperialist aggressors. For the sake of maintenance of national independence and defence of world peace, it is necessary to resist the forces of those imperialist aggressors. The entry into Tibet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army is thus an important measure to maintain Chinese independence, to prevent the imperialist aggressors from dragging the world towards war, and to defend world peace.

The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China welcomes the renewed declaration of the Indian Government that it has no political or territorial ambitions in China's Tibet and that it does not seek any new privileged position. As long as our two sides adhere strictly to the principles of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, we are convinced that the friendship between China and India should be developed in a normal way, and that the problems relating to Sino-Indian diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with respect to Tibet may be solved properly and to our mutual benefit through normal diplomatic channels.[53]

Although still completely unequivocal concerning Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, the Indian government saw positive aspects in the letter with regard to Indian commercial rights in Tibet and India's in-

53. Ibid.

terest in achieving a peaceful settlement. Menon, the Indian foreign secretary, told the British high commissioner in India that the Chinese note did not specifically question the Indian right to maintain their trade agencies and so forth in Tibet, and it referred to discussions through diplomatic channels of Indian interest in Tibet. Menon commented that this contrasted favorably with the Chinese ambassador's preceding statement.[54] Consequently, the Indian government pulled back from support of the Tibetan appeal, sending the following instructions to their U.N. delegation:

> (a) the Government of India did not like the El Salvador resolution and Rau was not to support it.
>
> (b) the question of timing of the handling of the Tibetan appeal needed careful consideration. Korea was obviously of first importance and it was therefore desirable that nothing should be said or done which was likely to embitter relations with China at this critical stage, and it would be preferable therefore *for no action to be taken on the Tibetan appeal for the present*. Little good could come out of any condemnation of the Chinese action in Tibet and at this stage such a condemnation might conceivably do a great deal of harm.[55]

THE UNITED NATIONS DEBATE ON THE TIBETAN APPEAL

On Friday, 24 November, a mere week after the Dalai Lama became ruler of Tibet, the issue of whether to include "the invasion of Tibet by foreign forces" as an additional item in the United Nations General Assembly was debated by the General Committee at the request of El Salvador. The U.N. report of the ensuing debate (written in the third person) is cited below. The move to defer action on Tibet's appeal was

54. FO371/84455, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 21 November 1950. Menon, however, also commented that he thought the Chinese would, in fact, try to clear the Indians out of Tibet as soon as they were in a position to do so, and indicated general agreement with the British interpretation of Tibet's legal position (ibid.)

55. FO371/84455, instructions related by G. S. Bajpai in a conversation with the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 30 November 1950.

suggested by the British representative, K. Younger, and strongly supported by India.

The debate began at 2:30 P.M. on Friday, 24 November 1950, under the chairmanship of Nasarolla Entezam of Iran. The chairman first asked Hector David Castro from El Salvador to give his proposal. The official U.N. report of the meeting stated:

> Two weeks ago the El Salvador delegation had asked the Secretary-General for a copy of the appeal forwarded to the United Nations by the Government of Tibet. The Secretary-General had agreed to that request but so far had taken no action in the matter. In pursuing the aims of the Charter, however, the United Nations should be careful not to isolate itself and lose all touch with governments which were not members of the Organization. Every important communication sent to the United Nations by the government of a non-member State should be made known to all member states. He [Castro] regretted that the Secretary-General had not distributed to delegations the appeal from the Government of Tibet. He [Castro] asked the President of the General Assembly to do everything possible to see that communications and documents sent by non-member States, like those sent by member States, were distributed to members of the United Nations when those members were called upon to take an important decision. The invasion of Tibet by Chinese armed forces had been announced by the press of the whole world. As the Government of Tibet had refused to comply with the orders of the Government of the so called People's Republic of China, the latter had decided to send a military expedition to Tibet. It should be borne in mind that the Government of Tibet had always shown readiness to enter into peaceful negotiations with the so-called People's Government of China. A delegation from the Government of Tibet had been on the point of proceeding to Peking when the invasion occurred.
>
> Little information was available; it was known that Tibet was invaded by a foreign army but the extent of the territory won by the army was not known.
>
> Before submitting its proposal to the General Committee, the Salvadorean delegation had had rather peculiar questions put to it. It had been asked whether its government was not, in the present case, acting under the influence of another government. The Government of El Salvador had always exhibited the fullest independence and the delegation of El Salvador had always complied with its Government's instructions. No

other government therefore could have influenced the Government or the delegation of El Salvador. He [Castro] then recalled the terms of the telegram and the letter sent on 14 November 1950 to the President of the General Assembly by the Chairman of the delegation of Salvador (A/1534).

The delegation of El Salvador had hoped that the General Assembly could make a decision on that question without referring it to the General Committee. This was a case of international aggression which the General Assembly could not overlook. Under the terms of Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the United Nations must "maintain international peace and security." Tibet, of course was not a member of the Organization, but the United Nations must maintain peace not only between member states, but throughout the whole world.

The aggression committed against Tibet should be of particular concern to the great powers. He recalled that a permanent member of the Security Council has accused the other permanent member of dealing with questions only in so far as their own political interests were concerned. There was no basis for that accusation, but, if the General Assembly refused to consider the proposal of El Salvador, some weight might attach to that charge.

Mr. Dulles had stated, in regard to threats to the independence and territorial integrity of China, that if the General Assembly took no action in that matter, it would disappoint the whole world. It would be equally disappointing if the General Assembly disregarded an act of international aggression on the pretext that consideration of that question would complicate still further the present situation. It might also be asked whether there was any basis for such an argument. Representatives of member States frequently made strong statements before the General Assembly and charged certain other Governments with pursuing a dangerous policy. Such statements showed the complete freedom of expression of delegations, but were more likely to complicate the international situation than was consideration of the aggression committed against Tibet.

Some claimed that Tibet was not autonomous at all and that it was a province of China, so that its invasion by a Chinese army would be an internal affair which came within the competence only of the Chinese Government. He [Castro] wished to submit certain information to members of the General Committee to show that that argument was unfounded. He then read an extract from *Chambers Encyclopaedia* (Volume XIII) where it was stated that the Central Government of Tibet

> consisted of the Dalai Lama acting through a Minister appointed by the Chief Lamas. That Minister presided over a Grand Council or Cabinet of four members. The country was divided into 170 administrative districts, each in the charge of a district magistrate who was responsible for the collection of taxes, the administration of civil affairs and the working of a civilian code of laws based on Buddhist teachings. The Central Government's authority decreased in proportion as the distance from Lhasa increased. The revenue, used largely to finance monasteries, religious festivals and the army, was raised by taxes levied on the lower classes and on exports. There were no banking facilities and taxes were frequently paid in kind, barter was common although there was a local currency and Indian coinage and paper money were used. The army, about 10,000 strong, was recruited by conscription and was stationed mainly on the eastern borders. Many senior officers had been trained in India.
>
> . . . He [Castro] did not think the General Assembly could disregard the aggression against Tibet on the mere pretext that that country was isolated and had but a few means of communication with the outside world. Tibet was a particularly important strategic position; the high plateaus of Tibet dominated India. These were facts which the General Assembly could not disregard.
>
> The representatives of the Tibetan Government were coming to New York to lay a complaint before the General Assembly or the Secretary-General. The General Assembly could not dismiss their case unheard.
>
> The Government of El Salvador had done its duty by drawing the attention of the General Committee to the aggression against Tibet. If the General Assembly disregarded that aggression, it would be neglecting its responsibilities.
>
> Finally Mr. Castro read the draft resolution submitted by his delegation (A/1534) and concluded by saying that the General Assembly should at least condemn the unprovoked act of aggression against Tibet.[56]

Following this, the British representative, Younger, spoke. As we saw earlier, the U.K. delegation preferred to avoid debate on the Tibetan issue. The Foreign Office, however, had been in favor of supporting some form of Tibetan appeal and on 18 November 1950 had sent relatively clear interim instructions to the U.N. delegation for any preliminary debate. These instructions stated:

56. As given in Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama n.d.: 7–10.

> You should maintain that Tibet is entitled to submit an appeal under Article 35 (2) of the Charter for the reasons contained in Commonwealth Relations Office telegram No. 2539 to New Delhi [discussed above]. If the point is raised you should explain that, even if a nominal Chinese suzerainty subject to Tibetan autonomy is recognised, Tibet's right of appeal is not thereby invalidated. But you should not commit us either to continuing or to repudiating recognition of Chinese suzerainty in the new circumstances. You should deplore the Chinese resort to force and stress that it was taken without provocation and while peaceful negotiations were in progress. You could, if necessary, support a resolution condemning Chinese action on these lines. You should not, however, without further instructions, support any resolution which calls for or implies the threat of military action by the United Nations.[57]

Although the British archives show no subsequent telegrams contravening these instructions, it appears that the general British policy of following India's lead gave Younger enough leeway to recommend taking no action at this time because, as will be seen, India wanted to prevent a United Nations General Assembly debate. Thus, as soon as the General Committee discussion was opened to the floor, Younger said that he

> did not think he could participate at that time in a general discussion on the question of Tibet. That did not mean that the United Kingdom delegation was attempting to shirk its own responsibilities or to prevent the United Nations from assuming its full responsibilities. The question before the Committee was one of procedure. The point was to decide what was the best way of considering the question of Tibet. Consideration of the question was not an end in itself, but rather a way of trying to settle the problem.
>
> The Committee did not know exactly what was happening in Tibet *nor was the legal position of the country very clear.* Moreover, it could still be hoped that the existing difficulties in Tibet could be settled amicably by agreement between the parties concerned. In those circumstances, before taking a decision the members of the General Committee would be wiser to wait until a better idea could be formed of the possibilities of a peaceful settlement. He proposed therefore, that the Committee

57. FO371/84454, telegram from the Foreign Office to the British U.N. delegation, dated 18 November 1950.

should defer decision on the request made by the delegation of El Salvador.[58]

Although the British Foreign Office did not consider the matter closed at this time and saw Younger's statement to the United Nations as a procedural postponement, news of this speech devastated the Tibetan pro-West leadership, who were stunned to find that Britain, of all countries, could say that the legal status of Tibet was unclear.[59]

Younger was followed by the Indian delegate, the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, who made a very strong speech stating that India, the country most closely involved, felt there was a chance for a peaceful settlement and argued that the United Nations could aid this not by discussing the Tibetan plea but, rather, by abandoning it. According to the official U.N. report, he said:

> His Government [India] had given careful study to the problems raised by the proposal of El Salvador to place the question of the invasion of Tibet by foreign forces on the General Assembly agenda. That was a matter of vital interest to both China and India. The Committee was aware that India, as a neighbour of both China and Tibet, with both of which it had friendly relations, was the country most interested in a settlement of the problem. That was why the Indian Government was particularly anxious that it should be settled peacefully.
>
> He had no desire to express an opinion on the difficulties which had arisen between China and Tibet, but would point out that, *in the latest note received by his Government, the Peking Government had declared that it had not abandoned its intention to settle those difficulties by peaceful means.* It would seem that the Chinese forces had ceased to advance after the fall of Chamdo, a town some 480 kilometers from Lhasa. The Indian Government *was certain* that the Tibetan Question could still be settled by peaceful means, and that such a settlement could safeguard the autonomy which Tibet had enjoyed for several decades while maintaining its historical association with China.
>
> His delegation considered that the best way of obtaining that objective was to abandon, for the time being, the idea of including the ques-

58. Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama n.d.: 11 (emphasis added).

59. Because the British attorney-general had not yet commented on the Foreign Office's interpretation of Tibet's legal status, the United Kingdom U.N. representative was, from the British point of view, technically not completely deceitful when he said that the British government felt Tibet's legal status was not clear.

> tion in the agenda of the General Assembly. That was why he supported the United Kingdom representative's proposal that consideration of the request for inclusion should be adjourned.[60]

This forceful Indian statement argued that the United Nations should abandon the issue because: (1) the Chinese had stopped their advance on Lhasa, that is to say, the precipitating crisis had ended; and (2) the last Chinese note to India on this issue suggested that it could be settled peacefully, and the Indian government was certain that would prove to be the case. However, since the Indian government knew very well that the Chinese and Tibetans were not negotiating at that time and that they were far apart in their aims, it is difficult to believe that India was *certain* of a peaceful outcome. In this regard, it is revealing to note that a British Foreign Office minute of 28 November thought that the last Chinese note to India "holds little hope of peaceful settlement."[61]

After the Indian delegate's speech, all the other countries fell into line. Australia's representative, Keith Officer, said that he "agreed with the representatives of the United Kingdom and India. In view of the statement made by the Indian representative, he would unreservedly support the United Kingdom proposal that consideration of the request for inclusion by El Salvador should be adjourned."[62] And the Russian representative

> agreed with the United Kingdom proposal. However he wished to explain his delegation's view on the substance of the question. It was an extremely simple question; Tibet was an inalienable part of China and its affairs were the exclusive concern of the Chinese Government.
>
> The representative of El Salvador had referred to newspaper articles and encyclopaedia, but he had not cited any international instrument in support of the argument that Tibet was an independent country, which had been invaded by Chinese troops. Chinese sovereignty over Tibet had been recognized for a long time by the United Kingdom, the United States and the U.S.S.R.
>
> The question was therefore one which came essentially within the

60. As given in Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama n.d.: 11–12 (emphasis added).
61. FO371/84455, Foreign Office minute by R. H. Scott, dated 28 November 1950.
62. As given in Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama n.d.: 12.

national jurisdiction of China; the United Nations could not consider it. If it did so, it would be guilty of unwarranted intervention in the internal affairs of the Chinese people, who had been liberated after centuries of foreign domination. That being so, his delegation would vote for the adjournment of consideration of the request submitted by the representative of El Salvador and even for its outright rejection.[63]

Finally, after a long speech by the representative of the Chinese Nationalist government on Taiwan, it was unanimously decided to adjourn consideration of the El Salvador proposal. Following this, the United States' representative, Ernest Gross, spoke. According to the U.N. report, he said:

[Gross] had voted for adjournment in view of the fact that the Government of India, whose territory bordered on Tibet and which was therefore an interested party, had told the General Committee that it hoped that the Tibetan question would be peacefully and honourably settled. In accordance with its traditional policy the United States would in any other circumstances have voted for the inclusion of the item in the General Assembly agenda. His government had always supported any proposal to refer to the United Nations international disputes or complaints of aggression, which could thus be aired, considered and settled at international hearings. That was the principle applied by the United States Government even in the case of accusations made against the United States and despite the illogical and fraudulent nature of the accusations.

However, in the present case, the United States delegation wanted to support the proposal made by the States most directly concerned in the subject matter of the request submitted by the delegation of El Salvador.[64]

Tibet's first appeal to the United Nations, therefore, had failed, although the United Nations had still not completely shut the door on the Tibetans. The Tibetan government's response and subsequent actions will be the subject of Chapter Twenty.

63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.

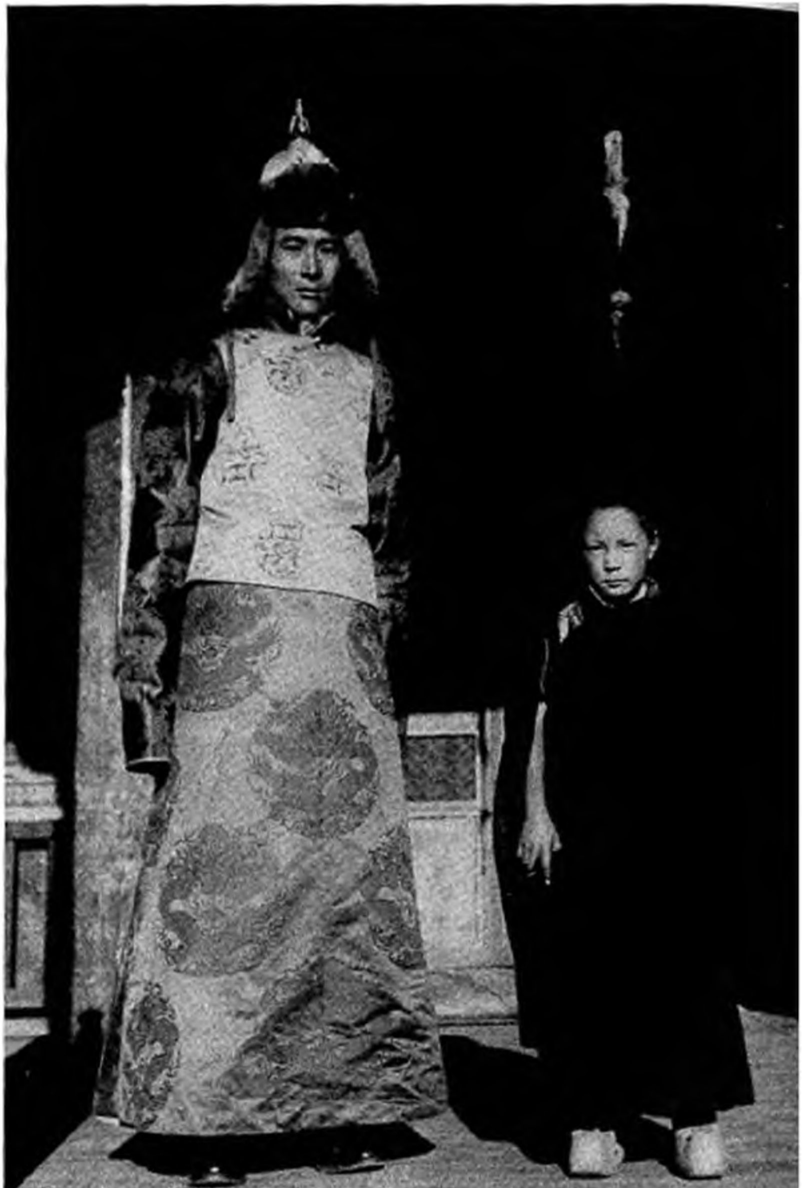
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TIBET CAPITULATES: THE SEVENTEEN-POINT AGREEMENT

By the end of November 1950, the situation in Lhasa was grim. Kham and the entire military force stationed there were lost; the United States and Britain had refused to accept Tibetan delegations seeking diplomatic and military assistance against the Chinese; the United Nations was unwilling to consider China's invasion of Tibet; India would not offer strong military and diplomatic support; only a few thousand troops were available to protect the road from Chamdo, and it was likely that the Chinese would be able to march into Lhasa whenever they chose. A feeling of isolation and vulnerability permeated the Lhasa religious and secular leadership.

At this time, the Dalai Lama and his key officials heard their first eyewitness account of Chinese Communist rule when the Dalai Lama's elder brother, Taktse Rimpoche (Thubten Norbu), suddenly arrived in Lhasa from Amdo (see Figure 61). As the abbot of Kumbum monastery in Chinese-Communist–controlled Tsinghai, he had lived under Chinese Communist rule for about a year and was dismayed by his experience. He claimed he had been kept under strict watch during this period and had been strongly urged by the Chinese to go to Lhasa to convince his brother to agree to the peaceful liberation of Tibet. The Chinese went so far as to promise him the position of governor of Tibet if he could accomplish this. After for some time refusing to cooperate, he ultimately pretended to agree to the Chinese plan so that he could escape to Lhasa and tell his brother his real views on the Communists.[1]

1. Taktse (Rimpoche), interview.



61.

Taktse Rimpoche (on left)

When Taktse Rimpoche reached the Tibetan northern district headquarters at Nagchuka, he arranged for the three Chinese accompanying him to be detained, and he continued on to Lhasa without them. There he related his experiences to the government and his brother, emphasizing his conviction that the Chinese Communists were untrustworthy and evil.

His firsthand account confirmed the advisability of moving the Dalai Lama to the Indian border, a plan secretly developed by the Kashag, Drönyerchemmo Phala, and the Trungtsigye immediately after the fall of Chamdo. They felt that it was too dangerous for the Dalai Lama to remain in Lhasa, since the Chinese army might push straight east from Chamdo and cut the escape route to India. They had decided to move him to Yatung, a small town about fifteen miles from the Indian (Sikkim) border; from there the Chinese could not possibly prevent his flight into exile even if they launched a full-scale invasion of Central Tibet. At this time, therefore, they decided which officials would accompany the Dalai Lama and who would replace them in Lhasa. Great care was taken not to alert the public; for example, when Shasur (Shankawa) and Thubten Ramyan were appointed as acting shapes, the Kashag only announced that additional officers were needed due to the increased workload.[2] In actuality, they had been earmarked to stay behind in Lhasa when the others moved to Yatung. At the same time, the Kashag instructed Shakabpa in Kalimpong to make arrangements for the Dalai Lama's stay and to find out what kinds of support the Dalai Lama could expect to receive if he went abroad. According to one former Tibetan official, Shakabpa soon afterward reported:

> If the Dalai Lama comes to a foreign country, the American and British governments have promised to help. The Indian government says you have to be very careful until he reaches Indian territory. The moment he reaches India, the Indian government will send bodyguards, etc., and all help. These are the promises I have been able to obtain from these countries. In case the liberation army has surrounded all of Tibet, the Americans will send a special plane to Lhasa to pick the Dalai Lama up. So therefore you should make arrangements for an airfield in Lhasa.[3]

2. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 98. Lhautara was one of the four trunyichemmo at this time.

3. Ibid.: 99.

There is no evidence in the American archives that the Americans ever made such an offer at this time, and this account is certainly incorrect. The Indians did, however, agree to give the Dalai Lama sanctuary in India away from the Tibetan border, and there was a plan to fly a private plane to Lhasa to pick up the Dalai Lama. Telegrams were sent dealing with these matters and in Lhasa a landing strip was made by clearing away boulders and whitewashing a section of the flat plain of Tsesumthang by Sera.[4]

Shortly after Taktse Rimpoche's arrival, two of the captured officials from Ngabö's Chamdo staff unexpectedly arrived with a letter from Ngabö.[5]

NGABÖ'S MESSAGE FROM CHAMDO

China's military action in Kham was aimed primarily at forcing Tibet to the negotiating table. Thus, the military successes in Kham were followed up, not by an invasion of Central Tibet, but by a new campaign for "peaceful liberation." China continued to assure Tibetans by radio broadcast and pamphlets that they would not alter the traditional social and religious systems, as the following poster illustrates. Issued by the Chinese administration in Kham on 9 November, it presented an attractive set of conditions to the Tibetans:

> With serious concern for the people of Tibet, who have suffered long years of oppression under American and British imperialists and Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary Government, Chairman Mao Tse-tung of the Central People's Government and Commander in Chief Chu Te of the People's Liberation Army ordered the People's Liberation Army troops to enter Tibet for the purpose of assisting the Tibetan people to free themselves from oppression forever.
>
> All the Tibetan people, including all lamas, should now create a solid unity to give the People's Liberation Army adequate assistance in ridding Tibet of imperialist influence and in establishing a regional self-government for the Tibetan people. They should at the same time build frater-

4. Ibid.; Gyentsen Tempel, interview.
5. Tsendrön Gyentsen Phüntso and Kandrön Samlinga, the two staff members, arrived on 1 December (Lha'u rta ra [Lhautara] 1982: 98).

nal relations, on the basis of friendship and mutual help, with other nationalities within the country and together construct a new Tibet within new China.

With the entry of the People's Liberation Army into Tibet, life and property of the Tibetan lamas and people will be protected. Freedom of religious belief will be safeguarded and Lama Temples will be protected. Assistance will be rendered to the Tibetan people in the direction of developing their educational, agricultural, pastoral, industrial, and commercial enterprises, and their living conditions will be improved.

No change will be made in the existing administrative and military systems of Tibet. Existing Tibetan troops will become a part of the National Defense Forces of the People's Republic of China. All lamas, officials and chieftains may remain at their posts. Matters relating to reforms in Tibet will be handled completely in accordance with the will of the Tibetan people and by means of consultations between the Tibetan people and Tibetan leaders.

Pro-imperialist and Kuomintang officials concerning whom there is definitive evidence that they had severed relations with the imperialists and Kuomintang and who will not carry out any sabotage or put up resistance may remain at their posts irrespective of their past history.

The People's Liberation Army is a strictly disciplined army which will faithfully carry out this policy of the Central People's Government. They will respect the Tibetan people's religious beliefs, as well as their traditional habits and local customs. They will be polite in their speech, fair in business transactions, and will not take a single thread from the people. In borrowing any articles, they will obtain the owner's consent; in cases of damage, compensation will be paid at market price of the article concerned. In hiring hands or animals, appropriate remuneration will be paid. No person will be drafted; no livestock taken away.[6]

China's posture was compatible with Ngabö's views, and he tried to encourage dialogue. On the first day after the surrender he was asked by the Chinese to speak at a meeting and said:

The relationship between China and Tibet is basically that of priest and patron. However, lately, we had some relations with the Kuomintang

6. USFR, 693.93B/11-2250, text included in memorandum from the U.S. State Department's Office of China Affairs to its Office of Far East Affairs, dated 22 November 1950. It is interesting to note that these terms were in essence the same as were later signed in the Seventeen-Point Agreement.

> party. After that the Kuomintang was defeated and they had to flee, so now the Communist Party has reached here.
>
> The people of Tibet had many doubts about the Chinese Communists because they heard that the Chinese eat the meat of horses and donkeys, and that they destroy monasteries and religion and kill old people [who are no longer able to work], etc. We tried to contact the Communist Party but this proved fruitless so we tried to defend our territory by placing guards on our borders but we have not attacked the Chinese. However, we have been defeated and we are now your prisoners. Whether you keep me under arrest or not, my hope was that we could have a good negotiation and a peaceful settlement. Thats all I can say.[7]

After Ngabö made his speech the Chinese took all the Tibetan officials back to Chamdo. There they were met by General Wang Chi-mi, who welcomed Ngabö with the gift of a scarf and said, "The People's Liberation Army has no desire other than to render service to the people of Tibet. However, due to the negative propaganda of foreign reactionaries and imperialists, you have mistaken our intent and have run away from us, thus inflicting unnecessary hardship upon yourself. We are very sorry about this," and then he burst into tears. This impressed Ngabö, who thought that since it was not easy to shed tears without reason, Wang was probably sincere.[8]

Ngabö was more than ever convinced that Tibet's only chance of preserving a degree of autonomous status was to negotiate. He discussed this with the Chinese leaders over the next few weeks, and the Chinese responded favorably, showing a keen interest in settling specific issues. However, Ngabö had no authority to negotiate for Tibet; he suggested that he try to initiate discussions between the Chinese and Lhasa by sending a personal letter to his colleagues in the Kashag.[9]

Ngabö's letter said that the Chinese army was extremely powerful militarily and that it would be better to enter into peaceful talks. It also said that the Chinese had guaranteed that while such negotiations were going on the People's Liberation Army would not invade Tibet and that

7. Horsur, interview. This is his recollection of a conversation he later had with his relative Ngabö.

8. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. He recalls that Ngabö told him this after he arrived in Chamdo to help in the negotiations in early 1951.

9. Ibid.

the life and authority of the Dalai Lama and the higher officers would definitely not be harmed. It added that if the Kashag had strong support from foreign countries and wanted to fight, the fact that Ngabö was a prisoner should not prevent them, but if there was no such support and if they trusted him, Ngabö would be happy to try his best to negotiate with the Chinese. If not, it urged them to send someone else as soon as possible.[10] Ngabö's letter alleviated the fear of an imminent invasion of Central Tibet and gave the leadership some breathing space in which the entire situation could be assessed. The government therefore opted to take advantage of the offer but still decided to move the Dalai Lama to Yatung, leaving two Lönchens, Lukhang and Lobsang Tashi, in charge in Lhasa. On 20 December 1950, a reigning Dalai Lama fled his palace in Lhasa for the third time in the century. He, his small band of ranking government officials, and the government's fortune in gold arrived in Yatung on 2 January 1951.[11]

Before leaving for Yatung, the Kashag appointed two officials, Sambo and Thubten Lengmön, to join Ngabö in Chamdo and assist him in negotiating with the Chinese. Sambo recalled his appointment and the general situation in Lhasa:

> When I was told I had to go to China I didn't think much about it. Life in Lhasa was very uncertain and tense and full of rumors. I expected that the Chinese would not harm us since we were coming as a delegation, and I felt it was better to be doing something than just to be sitting in Lhasa apprehensively waiting to see what transpired. My parents had already left for India (in July) with all of our valuables so I was not worried about them. At this time all the higher-class aristocratic families such as Tsarong and Surkhang had made arrangements to send their

10. Ibid.; Khe smad (Kheme) 1965: 5–6; Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 98–99. The latter reported that Ngabö said that the government should send Tibetan representatives to Peking to discuss the "peaceful liberation of Tibet," but the tone of this sounds unlikely. Ngabö is also said to have requested that if any of the officials who were prisoners with him had money they owed the government coming due, the government should either issue an exemption or should pay the interest [rather than adding it to the principal] so that later when they were released they would be able to repay the loans themselves (Shan kha ba [Shankawa] ms.: 302).

11. The main officials who went with the Dalai Lama were: two shapes, Ramba and Surkhang; three trunyichemmo, Chömpel Thubten, Ngawang Tragpa, and Lhautara; the tsipön Namseling; the co-head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau, Liushar; the Tseja secretary, Sholkang; the Bodyguard Regiment commander, Phala Sey; the drönyerchemmo Phala;

> wealth to India .[but] people at this time felt that even though Chamdo had fallen they would not have to stay in India a long time. I made hurried preparations to leave with my wife and arranged to send the remainder of our possessions in Lhasa to one of our estates. We left about four days after being told to go. Before leaving we were instructed to follow and serve Ngabö without asking questions. We were also given some money which we were to give to the staff members in Chamdo as compensation, and a Lamyik—or road pass to requisition transport—which normally worked right up to Chamdo. However, since Chamdo had fallen to the Chinese, no one knew for sure how far it would be honored and the thought was that after Lharigo it would be useless. Consequently, we were given about 600 *dotse* each for traveling expenses. The Kashag also gave us a note to take to Ngabö that contained five points. It was not sealed but, rather, rolled up so we could read it. I looked at it and at once realized that according to it no peaceful negotiations were possible. . The points were more like answers [to previous Chinese Communist claims in broadcasts] than negotiating points and none of these was compromisable.[12]

Sambo remembers only one of the five points. It said that although the Chinese were always talking about five different castes belonging to the same race which must unite, the Tibetans were very different from the Chinese.[13] However, a Chinese official in Peking recalled having seen the five points and lists them as follows:

> 1. There is no imperialist influence or power in Tibet. The small foreign relations that existed between Britain and Tibet was established only

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the acting chigyab khembo, Cawtang; and other high officials such as Kheme Dzasa (and, soon after, Dombo). Representing the monasteries were Shagaw Khembo from Drepung, the Töba Khembo from Sera, and Zeme Trulku from Ganden. In addition to these major officials a number of aides-de-camp and minor officials attached to offices accompanied the Dalai Lama. It is interesting to note that the real chigyab khembo, Gyambumgang, was left behind apparently because of the anti-Taktra bent of the Dalai Lama and Phala. The Dalai Lama had informed Gyambumgang in a letter that a divine lottery had selected him to remain in Lhasa and look after the Dalai Lama's household and treasures in Lhasa. His household member, Gyentsen Tempel, was also to be left behind, but Gyambumgang personally requested the Dalai Lama to take his younger relative along if he himself could not go (Gyentsen Tempel, interview). Gyentsen Tempel was present in Yatung as one of the Dalai Lama's aides-de-camp.

12. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. They were also given a secret telegraphic code book.
13. Ibid.

after the 13th Dalai Lama visited abroad. The relations with America are totally concerned with trade and business.

2. Territories that have been taken by the old Chinese Government, as well as those that have been recently "liberated," should be returned to Tibet.

3. In case foreigners attack Tibet, we will seek help from the Chinese Government.

4. The People's Liberation soldiers who are already in Kham and Chang [Northern Tibet] should be withdrawn.

5. In the future, China should not listen to the trouble-making activities of the Panchen and Reting groups.[14]

Given this unrealistic negotiating position, it is easy to understand why Sambo thought that there must be more appropriate oral instructions. As he recalled: "I thought that the five points were just the written position and that they would give us some special instructions so I went to see each of the acting shapes and the lönchens, ostensibly to bid them goodby but really hoping to receive private instructions. They didn't say a word to me about the negotiations."[15]

Sambo and Thubten Lengmön arrived in Chamdo the day before the Tibetan New Year (roughly, February 1951).[16] Two days later, at their first meeting with Ngabö, Sambo asked Ngabö where the negotiations were going to be held. Ngabö said he was not sure; he had received a telegram via the Chinese but he could not understand what it meant, so he did not know whether the negotiations were going to take place in Chamdo, Lhasa, or Peking.[17] He had sent a telegram to Lhasa asking for clarification and was waiting for a reply. Then Ngabö asked Sambo and Thubten Lengmön for the orders they had brought from the government and he took those to his room to read. After awhile Ngabö came rushing back to where Sambo was staying and said, "These five points are useless. Don't you have any other verbal instruc-

14. Lu'o (1982: 118) says that these five points were brought by another set of negotiators (discussed below) who came directly to Peking from Yatung. These appear to really be the instructions carried by Sambo, not by the later group.

15. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

16. They had first encountered Chinese troops in Pemba Dzong; from there they had wired ahead to notify Ngabö of their arrival.

17. Later they thought that this telegram had come from the Chinese ambassador in Delhi via Peking (Sambo [Rimshi], interview).

tions?" When he heard that there were none, he said, "What are we supposed to do now? How do they expect us to negotiate with such points?"[18]

In point of fact, the Tibetan government was trying to stall real negotiations with China until they reached Yatung and could both confer directly with Shakabpa and the other officials who had been working in India on outside support, and receive replies from a second attempt to secure U.N. support for Tibet.

TIBET'S NEW UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE

The Tibetan government responded to the United Nations by a strong note emphasizing the United Nations' moral duty to uphold the rights of small powers against more powerful neighbors and inviting the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission to Tibet. They also indicated that they would send their own delegation to Lake Success:

> Kalimpong, 8 December 1950
>
> We have heard with grave concern and dismay of the United Nations decision setting aside the discussion our appeal regarding the unwarranted violation our national territory by armed forces of the Central Peoples Government of the Peoples Republic of China. The agony and despair which prompted us to seek for the assistance of the United Nations Organization at a critical stage of the invasion will be better appreciated by those nations whose liberty is always at the mercy of being jeopardized by the aggressive designs of their more powerful neighbours. We who are completely secluded by a natural barrier from easy contact with the rest of the world have come to acknowledge that the only secure foundations of international peace and order can lie on the firm determination of all peace loving nations of the world to resist aggression and on their frank disapproval of all violent methods of settling inter-state disputes.
>
> It is therefore a matter of great surprise and regret to us that the United Nations on whom solely rests the responsibility of maintaining

18. Ibid.

the peace and well being of all nations should have so indifferently treated the peace appeal of a weak and peace loving people, hardly exceeding 3 million, beleaguered by their powerful neighbors, who are a mighty host of 450 million and whose resources are incomparably vaster than those of Tibet. Are we to believe in the Justice of Chinese demands over our liberty merely because they happen to be strong in arms?

It is today a matter of common knowledge that there have been hostile incursions into our territory by Chinese troops and that we have had to surrender a good portion of our land to the invaders. We have earlier reported how by surprise and force they seized the town of Chamdo and captured the large garrison we maintained there. Our liberators (?) have not made much progress since then but their armed soldiery are roving over weakly held areas in both eastern and western Tibet. In consequence the constant threat of being overpowered hangs ominously over us and our meagre resources, so long devoted to peaceful ends and to our religion, now strained by the need of protecting our country from being submerged by a force that is lethal to the values long cherished by our people, we are convinced that it would be the height of cowardice to bow to superior force. We would rather be overpowered by its blind rage than accept it with a show of reverence.

We have already made known our decision to abide by any settlement advocated by the United Nations. We do not wish the world to be convulsed into an armed conflict for our sake and yet we would like to know that the world has given thought and consideration to the issue that we have so humbly brought before them and advised the Chinese not to indulge in murder and intimidation of our peaceful lands. There can be no better opportune moment than the present when Chinese delegates have arrived at Lake Success in connection with other matters to have a full and frank discussion of the Tibetan issue. We have decided if necessary to despatch a small delegation to the United Nations to assist the Assembly in their deliberations.

Should there be any doubt or hesitation on the part of any of the various delegations to the United Nations regarding our claim to a separate Tibetan culture and existence apart from the Chinese we should be happy to welcome a United Nations fact finding commission to carry out investigation in Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama graciously consented to assume full power for the administration of Tibet at the unanimous request of all his people on 17 November. It is with his consent and blessing that we

venture to place this fresh appeal before the United Nations for consideration.

Dated Lhasa, 3 December 1950, Tibetan delegation, Shakabpa (House Kalimpong)[19]

A few weeks after this, on 21 December, the Tibetan government's U.N. mission sent new appeals to Britain, the United States, and Canada informing them of their plans to go to the U.N. headquarters in Lake Success and requesting their support for this action. No such appeal was made to India, undoubtedly because the Tibetans felt it would be pointless.[20] Their letter to the United States said:

> We would like to inform Your Excellency we three, Foreign Secretary Dzasak Surkhang, Dzasak Gyaltakpa and Khencung Choepel [Chömpel] Thubten, together with Tsjchag Thubden Gyalpo and Tsepon Shakabpa have instructions from our government to go to Lake Success agitate and enforce appeal which Kashag Cabinet National Assembly Tibet submitted UN re hostile incursions into Tibet by Chinese Communists and we are all now here Kalimpong.
>
> Though Government Tibet recently submitted fresh appeal UN for early discussion on Tibetan issue, it is presumed no decision has yet been reached for discussion and further we have also had no information from UN attend Assembly which keeps us waiting here.
>
> Government and people Tibet have great hope your government will afford effective help in any problems Tibet and therefore they earnestly hope your government will help bring question Tibet under discussion in UN Assembly soonest.
>
> We hope your Excellency will give us your valuable advice that will make matter Tibet success.[21]

19. FO371/84455, copy of U.N. file A/1658, original English version of Tibetan appeal, dated 11 December 1950 (emphasis added), Shakabpa (interview) said that after the first U.N. appeal he was informed about the United Nation's uncertainty as to whether the appeal was actually from the Tibetan government or a private group and had notified the Kashag of this. The second appeal therefore clearly mentions in the last sentence that the appeal comes from the Dalai Lama as ruler of Tibet.

20. USFR, 793B.00/12-2250, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 27 December 1950.

21. USFR, 793B.00/12-2650, cited in a telegram from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. State Department, dated 27 December 1950. The letter to Britain was identical.

Britain instructed its high commissioner in New Delhi to respond to the Tibetan appeal as follows:

> Unless Indian Government have strong objections, we should be glad if you would now reply to Tibetan communication on following lines.
>
> Government of United Kingdom continue to maintain the friendly interest which they have taken in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy since August 1947, when the rights and obligations arising from the existing treaty provisions devolved on the Government of India. Since the Government of the Chinese People's Republic have resorted to force instead of seeking to reach agreement on the question of Sino-Tibetan relations through the peaceful methods of discussion and negotiation, the Government of the United Kingdom are prepared to afford their general support to the Tibetan Government's appeal to the United Nations.[22]

The United Kingdom High Commissioner disagreed strongly with even this mild statement:

> I would strongly deprecate making this communication to Government of India and would also recommend against making any reply on proposed lines to Tibetan letter at this juncture.
>
> 2. The Foreign Secretary [of Govt. of India] this morning confirmed our impression that things are at present quiet in Tibet and that there is no sign of any early resumption of Chinese advance toward Lhasa. He said in confidence that Panikkar had reported from Peking recently that he had heard that talks were proceeding at Chamdo between Chinese representatives and representatives of Tibetan Government.
>
> 3. As regards United Nations angle the Foreign Secretary said that Tibetan Delegation were still in India and had not so far as he knew made any definite plans to leave for New York. The Indian view which he understood was shared by us was that in the absence of any further forward movement by Chinese and given many other issues now under discussion at Lake Success, it was preferable to postpone any hearing of Tibetan appeal. In these circumstances our suggested reply to Tibetans some five weeks after their letter to us would probably be interpreted by them as a direct encouragement to become more active at Lake Success. If it came to the ears of Chinese they would surely regard it as further

22. FO371/84455, telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 16 December 1950.

> evidence of British interference. The Government of India would certainly consider such reactions from both Chinese and Tibetans as probable and would ask why we thought it necessary to make such a reply at all and if so deprecate our action. Incidentally there has been no hint that Tibetans are expecting any further reply from us.[23]

The British U.N. delegation replied similarly, and London decided to do nothing.[24] The government ultimately instructed their high commissioner in India:

> We are unable to give Tibetans this assurance [that Britain would help get the Tibetan appeal on the U.N. agenda] since in view of other issues now under discussion in United Nations, we do not consider that time is opportune for raising question of the Tibetan appeal, nor, if it were, should we be willing to take the initiative ourselves in view of Government of India's more immediate interest and responsibility in this matter. We are of course prepared to afford our general support to the Tibetan appeal to United nations when question is raised . . . but it is considered that even an assurance of this nature to Tibetans might be misleading at this stage in the context of their last communication and we should not wish to do anything which would tend to raise their hopes unduly.[25]

They did, however, instruct the high commissioner that he could issue transit visas for the Tibetan delegation to the United Nations.[26]

The attitude of the Indian government, as reported to the U.S. ambassador and the British high commissioner, was even more negative. On 18 December, Bajpai said that India's attitude regarding the Tibetan case remained unchanged. "GOI was still interested in Tibet case before UN but had delayed action pending outcome its efforts assist in achieving cease-fire in Korea. GOI had decided that criticism by it of Communist China in UN just now might adversely affect India's ability

23. FO371/84455, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 18 December 1950.

24. FO371/84455, telegram from the British Foreign Office to the United Kingdom U.N. delegation, dated 7 December 1950.

25. FO371/93002, telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 2 January 1951.

26. FO371/8469, telegram from the Commonwealth Relations Office to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 9 December 1950.

exert influence on China in direction cease-fire."[27] A few weeks later he offered the same reasons to the United States: "If GOI should press Tibetan case just now in UN Communist China would be alienated to such extent GOI would lose all ameliorating influence on Peping re Korea and related problems. Therefore Tibetan case would remain temporarily in abeyance as far as GOI concerned."[28]

The United States, however, had become even more interested in and sympathetic to the Tibetans' plight. On 14 December, the State Department sent the following telegraph to the U.S. ambassador in India:

> DEPT desires explore possibility of joint US-UK-India position aiming at obstructing or halting CHI COMMIE assault Tibet, which now seems slowed or stalled. . .
>
> Prior to DEPT approach to BRIT UR [your] views requested on (1) possibility of getting active Indian support of Tibetan case in UN; (2) probable reaction of GOI to a proposal for quiet US support of more positive measures designed to stiffen Tibetan resistance; and (3) suggestions as to possible measures and means of implementation of both measures.[29]

Ambassador Henderson's reply on 30 December tended toward United States assistance of the Tibetans:

> We have been giving considerable thought this end to problem Tibetan case before UN. Thus far seemed preferable India take lead this matter UN. Representatives GOI had repeatedly assured us it intended do so. Now appears views B. N. Rau and other India officials who do not wish India make any move in present world contest which might offend Communist China have prevailed and GOI continues postpone taking initiative re Tibet in UN. Seems likely Communist China will have taken over Lhasa and have fastened firmly its grip on Tibet before GOI prepared take lead in UN. We seem faced with choice supporting some power other than India, taking initiative or of continuing postpone hearing

27. USFR, 793B.00/12-1850, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 18 December 1950.

28. USFR, 793B.00/12-2550, conversation reported in a telegram from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. State Department, dated 27 December 1950.

29. USFR, 793B.00/12-1450, telegram from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. ambassador in India, dated 14 December 1950.

> Tibetan pleas until autonomous Tibet ceases to exist. We are wondering whether this would be to credit UN. Is it logical for UN which gave Indonesia which was under Dutch sovereignty hearing to ignore Tibet? Will India, for example, have greater respect for UN if merely out of deference to it, UN gives Tibet no opportunity present case? We do not feel qualified make any fast recommendation because we are not acquainted with all ramifications international situation this particular moment. Nevertheless, we suggest Tibetan question be revived before substantive reply is made to letter from Tibetan delegation.[30]

Four days later the State Department informed the ambassador that the Tibetans could be given visas for temporary entry to the United States and that while the United States position on the Tibetan United Nations appeal was not yet formulated, the State Department was "hopeful [that the] presence [of the] Tibetan DEL[egation] in [the] U.S. may precipitate earlier consideration by interested countries."[31] At this stage, however, the Tibetan mission to the United Nations was only informed that their appeal was being forwarded to Washington.

THE UNITED STATES RECONSIDERS ITS POLICY ON TIBET

Meanwhile, in the United States, the various sections of the State Department were trying to formulate a policy. Some argued that the United States should not consider the Tibetan case in the United Nations because no concrete measures could be taken to assist Tibet. Others argued the advantages to be gained from hearing the Tibetan appeal, including anti-Communist propaganda and continuation of the U.S. policy of hearing all such appeals. Robert Strong of the Office of Chinese Affairs expressed the dominant view in a memorandum to O. E. Clubb, the director of that office:

> I expressed the view to Mr. Meyers [from the United Nations Office of Political and Security Affairs] that although it appeared that we could

30. USFR, 793B.00/12-3050, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 30 December 1950.
31. USFR, 793B.00/12-2650, telegram from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. ambassador in India, dated 3 January 1951.

> not prevent Communist occupation of Tibet, it would be desirable, if possible, to lay the groundwork for keeping Tibet stirred up and also for other factors which might be created in the future to challenge Communist ability to retain control of Tibet, and that the present circumstances would probably be as good as any other time to obtain international clarification of Tibet's status by general UN action in order that the field might be cleared for whatever decision we might wish to take relative to Tibet's political status at any future date; admittedly these are long-term considerations, but it was most desirable that the groundwork be laid now.
>
> Mr. Meyers expressed the opinion that Tibet's appeal would find general support outside the Soviet bloc and that even though India does not desire to take the initiative in the matter at this time, it too, would support Tibet.[32]

Three days later, on 6 January, the U.S. secretary of state informed the U.S. ambassador in India that the State Department did not feel that the Tibetan matter, even at this late date, should be permitted to "go by default"[33] and instructed him to respond to the letter of the Tibetan mission by saying that the "Department of State has noted your appeal of December 21, 1950. Furthermore, the Department of State is interested in the continuance of Tibetan autonomy and views sympathetically the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations."[34] This was sent by air mail to the Tibetan mission in Kalimpong on 12 January 1951. At the same time the State Department instructed the U.S. Embassy in London to ask whether the British Foreign Office considered any action feasible "given the Indian unwillingness to support Tibet in or out of UN at this time."[35] Some weeks earlier, in Washington, the State Department had given the British Embassy an aide-mémoire that traced the U.S. viewpoint on Tibet from 1943 to the present. It took a very pro-Tibetan position:

32. USFR, 793B.00/1-351, memorandum from R. Strong to O. E. Clubb, dated 3 January 1951.

33. USFR 793B.00/1-651, telegram from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. ambassador in India, dated 6 January 1951.

34. USFR, 320 Tibet, letter from the U.S. ambassador to Surkhang, Gyaltakpa, and Chömpel Thubten in Kalimpong, dated 11 January 1951.

35. USFR, 793B.00/1-651, telegram from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. ambassador in Britain, dated 6 January 1951.

Aide-Mémoire

The attention of the British Embassy is invited to the Department's aide-mémoire of May 15, 1943 summarizing the United States attitude toward Tibet, that is that the United States had borne in mind the Chinese claim to suzerainty over Tibet, that this Government had never raised a question regarding that claim, and that it did not at that time desire to open a discussion of the matter.

In 1943 likewise, the United States sent a mission to Tibet, with the invitation for the mission to visit Lhasa negotiated through the Indian Government and channeled through the British Political Officer in Tibet. At that time no application was made to the Chinese National Government for a permit to visit Tibet.

It does not appear that the United States has ever taken an official public stand in respect to the legal position of Tibet. It is observed, however, that the Chinese claim to authority over Tibet would have been derived through succession to rights exercised previously by the Manchu Dynasty in China. Tibet itself successfully undertook in 1912, after the Chinese Revolution, the expulsion of Chinese troops by force, declared its independence in the same year, and at the Simla Conference in 1914 Tibet was a party to an agreement accepted likewise by the Chinese and British representatives, which provided for the autonomous status of Tibet. It is understood that the Chinese Government's refusal to acknowledge the signature of its representative at the Simla Conference derived from border questions and was not due to opposition to the proposal that the Tibetans should enjoy an autonomous status. It is recognized universally that Tibet has exercised *de facto* autonomy from 1914 particularly, to the present date.

The United States, which was one of the early supporters of the principle of self-determination of peoples, believes that the Tibetan people has the same inherent right as any other to have the determining voice in its political destiny. It is believed further that, should developments warrant, consideration could be given to recognition of Tibet as an independent State. The Department of State would not at this time desire to formulate a definitive legal position to be taken by the United States Government relative to Tibet. It would appear adequate for present purposes to state that the United States Government recognized the *de facto* autonomy that Tibet has exercised since the fall of the Manchu Dynasty, and particularly since the Simla Conference. It is believed that, should the Tibetan case be introduced into the United Nations, there would be an ample basis for international concern regarding Chinese Communist intentions toward Tibet, to justify under the United Nation's Charter a

hearing of Tibet's case in either the UN Security Council or the UN General Assembly.

Department of State,
Washington, December 30, 1950.[36]

The British Foreign Office's reception of this statement was less than enthusiastic. One commentator wrote that "American policy in regard to Tibet is part of the general pattern of their policy towards China: resist Chinese pressure even if only by propaganda." Another wrote, "The U.S. always seem to think that 'action' is the panacea for everything."[37]

In the meantime, the U.S. Embassy in India responded to a series of earlier State Department questions as follows:

> Before the Dalai Lama left Lhasa Tibetan Foreign Secretary, according press, indicated "Tibet is united as one man behind Dalai Lama who has taken over full powers and there is no possibility fifth column operating Tibet proper; we have appealed world for peaceful intervention in clear case unprovoked aggression but should no help be forthcoming we are determined fight for our independence; if necessary we are even prepared remove government and Dalai Lama other parts to continue fight. Tibet is large, difficult country re terrain and as we have men, ammunition we can continue warfare indefinitely."
>
> Despite this brave statement we are inclined believe Tibetan spirit resistance has been steadily ebbing. Apparent decision Dalai Lama remain at least temporarily Yatung however somewhat encouraging. Even this late date if GOI, US and UN would show greater interest Tibet and indicated readiness assist, Tibetan will to resist might be revived to extent at least. GOI, however, appears to have abandoned hope, and in view this fact and its anxiety not to offend Peking it would not be easy to prevail on it to extend further assistance or to permit armed shipments through India for Tibet.
>
> Unless there is an immediate future indication that Tibet might receive moral as well as substantial military aid from abroad Dalai Lama might depart from country and with his departure all effective resistance would probably collapse.

36. FO371/93002, attachment of U.S. aide-mémoire to a letter from the British Embassy in Washington to the British foreign secretary, dated 6 January 1950.

37. FO371/93002, minute by R. H. Scott, dated 10 January 1951, and comment by unknown official.

We doubt Dalai Lama would have any effectiveness as center of support for internal resistance if in India and if Chinese Communists control Tibetan Government and country. In addition, GOI would probably not permit him to direct resistance movement from India.

2. Difficult this end make recommendations reaction UN. Suggest: first step would be invitation Tibetan delegation proceed immediately Lake Success to present case and to Peking to present its side; second step would be hearing both sides of case; third might be presentation resolution by US or some other friendly UN member in case India still unwilling take lead calling for cease-fire and negotiations to be completed by definite date. Appointment suitable person as commissioner of good offices who should proceed Tibet or elsewhere to assist parties and who should report to UN at specified intervals.

Peking would probably refuse appear to defend case on various grounds including interference in internal affairs China and would undoubtedly reject UN next move asking for cease-fire. Nevertheless, we believe hearing should be held, cease-fire should be asked for and in event Peking ignores these actions, passage resolution condemning Communist China for using force in endeavoring deprive Tibet long established autonomy. Whether it would be possible go further this point would depend on attitude other members UN, particularly India and UK.

3. We have suggested foregoing comparatively mild steps in hope they would appeal to UN, particularly India which we know does not desire come to direct issue with Peking. At same time in absence effective force by UN or its members they may serve dramatize China's aggressive attitude towards Tibet in world forum.[38]

Meanwhile, the Indian foreign secretary, K. P. S. Menon, told the U.S. ambassador that "the Indian Government had definitely decided to take no action over Tibet in the United Nations which might have the effect of lessening their influence with the Chinese People's Government."[39] And the British Foreign Office informally told the United States that the British view

38. USFR, 793B.00/1-1251, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. Secretary of State, dated 12 January 1951.

39. FO371/93002, note by a Foreign Office official on a meeting with a U.S. Embassy official, dated 10 January 1951.

> continues to be UK should support any Indian sponsorship Tibetan position or any reasonable move by another power on Tibet's behalf. FONOFF realizes any action in UN can be of little practical value in preventing Tibet's absorption by CPG. While it is realized some sort of action should be taken at an appropriate time, if only for the record, Tibetan problem relatively subordinate and overshadowed by larger issues; to attempt to raise issue now in UN would probably serve only exacerbate CPG, and fail receive support it deserves from other powers, preoccupied as they are in attempt seek solution Korean problem.[40]

But while the United States was moving toward more active support of Tibet, the Tibetans were deciding to abandon their U.N. initiative and enter into real negotiations with the Chinese in Peking.

THE YATUNG MEETINGS

By the time the Dalai Lama and his attenuated government arrived in Yatung on 7 January 1951, intense debate had already taken place regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the Dalai Lama going into exile. A key element in this debate was whether the Dalai Lama could expect any serious assistance from India and the Western democracies if he decided to flee. Thus, two days after arriving in Yatung, all Tibetan officials in Kalimpong were ordered to report there for an assembly at which their experiences abroad would be discussed.[41] When Shakabpa appeared before the assembly, he explained in detail how the British had blocked him and Thubten Gyalpo from going to Hong Kong by refusing to give them visas, and how Nehru and the Indian government had failed to help them.[42] His negative report on the situation in India and abroad tallied with the experiences of the Lhasa leadership, who had as yet not received an invitation from the United Nations, from the United States, or from Britain. Pressure was also being

40. USFR, 793B.00/1-951, telegram from the U.S. Embassy, London, to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 9 January 1951.

41. USFR, 793B.001/1-851, telegram from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 8 January 1951.

42. Shakabpa found the atmosphere in Yatung decidedly unfriendly and returned to Kalimpong a few days after he arrived. His colleague Thubten Gyalpo continued to attend the assembly meetings (Shakabpa, interview).

exerted from Lhasa, where the abbots of the Three Seats and other officials had concluded that the Chinese terms were not inimical to the continuation of the Dalai Lama's government and religion. This group feared that if the Dalai Lama went abroad it would be difficult to insure that the Chinese honored such terms. Among other efforts, they sent three delegations of abbots and monks to Yatung to implore the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa. The first of these arrived at the beginning of February.

After ten days of meetings, the majority were strongly in favor of starting serious negotiations with China. Surkhang Dzasa and Trunyichemmo Chömpel Thubten were immediately sent to Delhi on a secret mission to discuss the site for talks with the Chinese ambassador and to secure his agreement to additional negotiators being sent from Yatung. Under the pretext of a pilgrimage to India's Buddhist holy sites,[43] Surkhang and Chömpel Thubten arrived in Calcutta on 25 January. Soon afterward they visited Delhi, where they met with the Chinese ambassador. He made a very favorable impression on Chömpel Thubten by his emphatic assurances that if Tibet acknowledged it was a part of China, Peking would not change the politico-religious system in any way. Although the ambassador insisted that the negotiations take place in Peking rather than in Chamdo or Lhasa, he readily agreed that the Chinese would halt their invasion while the talks were proceeding and would treat their prisoners well. He also agreed to the Tibetans sending two more officials from Yatung via sea to Peking.[44] After only a week in Delhi, Surkhang and Chömpel Thubten returned to Yatung. Chömpel Thubten described the encounter with the ambassador as a great victory for Tibet; from this point on, he became the staunchest supporter of a negotiated peace with the Chinese.[45]

In Yatung, the government appointed Kheme Dzasa (Sonam Wangchug) and Trunyichemmo Lhautara to head the additional negotiating

43. USFR, 320 Tibet, telegram from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 12 February 1951.

44. Phüntso Tashi, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

45. Shakabpa, interview. Shakabpa also said that the Chinese ambassador gave Chömpel Thubten a small bust of Mao Tse-tung's head, which Chömpel used to indicate symbolically that he had vanquished the Chinese. He made a big impression when he put the head on the table and said, "I have plucked the head of Mao and have carried it back."

team and sent them to Peking in late March, together with Phüntso Tashi (the Chinese-speaking brother-in-law of the 14th Dalai Lama). At this time a telegram was sent to Chamdo instructing Ngabö and the others to leave at once for Peking.

NEGOTIATIONS IN PEKING

Ngabö, Sambo, and Thubten Lengmön arrived in Peking from Chamdo on 22 or 23 April, and Kheme and Lhautara arrived from Yatung on 26 April. Chou En-lai himself came to the railway station to meet the former group, while Chu Teh, the commander-in-chief of the People's Liberation Army, welcomed the latter.[46]

The delegation from Yatung brought a ten-point written statement that was the basis of the Tibetan position. They were instructed to use their judgment, but were to accept the status of Tibet as a part of China only in a token sense.[47] They were instructed to establish a wireless link between Peking and Yatung so that other important issues could be discussed. They were clearly not authorized to make major decisions on their own.[48]

The Yatung delegation also brought Ngabö discouraging news about the status of outside assistance, including a report on a recent meeting with Nehru. They had been instructed to stop in Delhi and ask Nehru's advice and help in the negotiations, and in particular to request him to pledge India's participation in any Sino-Tibetan agreement as a guarantor. Ignoring the request, Nehru advised them to admit that Tibet was a part of China, since it was seen as such in the eyes of the world. He also told them they would probably have to agree to Chinese control over Tibet's foreign relations, although he strongly urged them not to permit Chinese troops to be stationed in Tibet.[49]

With this in mind, Ngabö and the others examined the ten-point

46. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. It is interesting to note that Ngabö decided to forego the traditional custom of presenting scarves, apparently because it would make Tibetans seem too backward to the Chinese. On the way to Peking, he had also cut his hair, although long hair is required for lay officials.

47. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 103. He was one of the Tibetan negotiators.

48. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. He, too, was one of the negotiators.

49. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 104.

statement. They felt that although it was a major improvement over the five-point statement brought earlier from Lhasa, it was still unrealistic and would only poison the negotiating atmosphere. Ngabö suggested that certain points should be kept in mind during the upcoming talks, but that the statement should not be presented to the Chinese.

Ngabö also believed that they should not refer important issues back to Yatung but should take the responsibility upon themselves. He argued persuasively that the abbots and other conservatives in the assembly had no idea of the modern world and the Chinese Communists; they would refuse to accept the wording and terms the Chinese were going to present and would insist on talking about the patron-priest relationship and independence. He feared it would take weeks or months to make decisions if the National Assembly had to discuss each issue and that the Chinese would lose patience and renew their invasion of Tibet. However, if the negotiators assumed the responsibility, Ngabö said, an agreement could be reached quickly and in a spirit of friendship. He also pointed out that if the Dalai Lama and the government found this agreement unacceptable, they could later repudiate it on the grounds that the delegation did not have complete authority. As the leader of the delegation, Ngabö said, he would take full responsibility for this action and would accept any later punishment if the Tibetan government ultimately received outside assistance and decided to fight against the Chinese. The four other delegates agreed.[50]

A few days after the Yatung team arrived in Peking, they were asked to participate in a welcoming ceremony at the railroad station for the young man the Chinese (and the Panchen Lama's labrang) accepted as the new Panchen Lama. This raised a sensitive issue, for the Tibetan government had not yet accepted him as the true Panchen Lama. Not wanting to start the negotiations on a sour note by refusing, the Tibetans sent their most junior official, Sambo, who underplayed the occasion by wearing layman's clothes instead of official garb and by withholding the traditional acts of deference. Sambo thinks the Panchen Rimpoche never knew that there was a Tibetan of high rank in the

50. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

welcoming party.[51] As we shall see below, this was only the beginning of the Panchen Lama issue.

The negotiations began on the afternoon of 29 April 1951, in a large room in which the Chinese and Tibetans faced each other from opposite rows of benchlike sofas. The head of the Chinese team was Li Wei-han, the chairman of the National Minorities Commission; the head of the Tibetan team was Ngabö Shape. Both sides had translators, but the Chinese translator, the Khamba Phüntso Wangye, was very fluent in both languages and in effect became the official translator. The Tibetans' translator, the Dalai Lama's brother-in-law, Phüntso Tashi, acted as a check on Phüntso Wangye.

Li Wei-han opened the meeting by saying that they were all there to discuss issues of great importance and should first decide on a procedure. He asked if Ngabö had prepared a position statement. When Ngabö replied that he had not, Li said that it would be better to start from a written agenda and asked if Ngabö would let him draw one up and present it on the following day. Ngabö agreed, and the meeting broke up.

On the thirtieth, Li brought a statement containing the same ten points that the Chinese had broadcast and posted on walls in Chamdo and Kham. It included such statements as "The people should return to the big motherland," along with guarantees of religious freedom. The Chinese were very polite and asked the Tibetans to read it over carefully. Li said, "If you accept them all, that is good; but if not, we will reconsider and discuss them. And in any case, we both can add more points." There was a long silence as the Tibetans read the points. When none of the Tibetans ventured to speak, Li suggested that they adjourn. Thus ended the second day of negotiations.[52]

Because of the 1 May celebrations, the negotiators did not meet again until 2 May. Li began by asking Ngabö what special instructions he had received regarding the Panchen Lama. When Ngabö told him that he had none, Li replied, "How is that possible? This is one of the most important concerns and events for Tibetans everywhere." Ngabö

51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.

agreed that it was an important concern, but insisted that he had no instructions. Then Li asked Ngabö whether he accepted the Panchen Lama as the real incarnation. Ngabö replied that he could not accept anyone as the Panchen Lama's reincarnation until the reincarnation had been officially accepted by the Tibetan government. Li persisted, telling Ngabö that as a shape he could accept the Panchen on behalf of his government. Ngabö disagreed. He carefully explained the process by which the Panchen Lama was selected, informing Li that, as was customary, two or three candidates were being considered and that the Tibetan government had to conduct divinations and other tests with all the candidates. Li emphasized China's acceptance of the candidate and implied that the Tibetans would have to support him. Ngabö retorted, "If you have accepted him that is good, but we have not accepted him." The meeting that day ended in a stalemate.[53]

At their next meeting, Li again raised the issue of the Panchen Lama, refusing to discuss anything else until this was resolved. The Tibetans were astonished, but since they clearly had no authority to accept the Chinese candidate as the true reincarnation they could do nothing. For the next six or seven days, the meetings focused exclusively on recognition of the Panchen Lama, but without the slightest sign of change i the attitude of either side. The Chinese put forth many arguments as to why the delegation should accept their candidate, and the Tibetans repeatedly explained why such acceptance was impossible. Finally, Li presented an ultimatum, explaining that because the Panchen Lama had accepted Mao as the new leader of China before the liberation of Tsinghai and Mao had accepted the candidate as the true incarnation of the late Panchen Lama, the "face" of Mao and China were at stake.[54]

At this juncture, Ngabö told Li he would have to wire Yatung. Ngabö made it clear in his communiqué that the Chinese would not begin the real negotiations until the Tsinghai candidate had been officially recognized by the Tibetan government. The Tibetan government, however, had insisted for years that they could not accept this candidate

53. Ibid. The 9th Panchen Lama died in exile in Jyekundo (China) in December of that year.
54. Ibid.

until he had been sent to Lhasa for a final examination along with all the other candidates. Given the desperate circumstances, the Dalai Lama and his advisors now relented and quickly conducted a lottery divination which conveniently reported that the candidate in Peking was the true incarnation of the late Panchen Lama.[55]

THE DISCUSSIONS ON THE AGREEMENT

With the last impasse overcome, the negotiations began in earnest. In less than two weeks, on 23 May 1951, both sides signed what has come to be known as the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The text of this, with a discussion of the points,[56] follows:

THE AGREEMENT OF THE CENTRAL PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF TIBET ON MEASURES FOR THE PEACEFUL LIBERATION OF TIBET, 1951.

Preamble

The Tibetan nationality is one of the nationalities with a long history within the boundaries of China and, like many other nationalities, it has performed its glorious duty in the course of the creation and development of our great Motherland. But over the last one hundred years or more, imperialist forces penetrated into China, and in consequence also penetrated into the Tibetan region and carried out all kinds of deceptions and provocations. Like previous reactionary governments, the Kuomintang reactionary government continued to carry out a policy of oppressing and sowing dissension among the nationalities, causing division and disunity among the Tibetan people. And the local government of Tibet did not oppose the imperialist deceptions and provocations, and adopted an unpatriotic attitude toward our great Motherland. Under such conditions, the Tibetan nationality and people were plunged into the depths of enslavement and suffering.

In 1949, basic victory was achieved on a nationwide scale. In the Chinese People's War of Liberation, the common domestic enemy of all nationalities—the Kuomintang reactionary government—was over-

55. Ibid.
56. Sen 1960: 78–81. The views of the Tibetan delegation were reported by Sambo, interview.

thrown, and the common foreign enemy of all the nationalities—the aggressive imperialist forces—was driven out. On this basis, the founding of the People's Republic of China and of the Central People's Government was announced. In accordance with the Common Programme passed by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Central People's Government declared that all nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal, and that they shall establish unity and mutual aid and oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People's Republic of China will become a big fraternal and cooperative family, composed of all its nationalities, that within the big family of all nationalities of the People's Republic of China, national regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated, and all national minorities shall have freedom to develop their spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their customs, habits, and religious beliefs, while the Central People's Government shall assist all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural and educational construction work. Since then, all nationalities within the country, with the exception of those in the areas of Tibet and Taiwan, have gained liberation. Under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government and the direct leadership of higher levels of People's Government, all national minorities are fully enjoying the right of national equality and have established, or are establishing, national regional autonomy.

In order that the influences of aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet might be successfully eliminated, the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the People's Republic of China accomplished, and national defence safeguarded; in order that the Tibetan nationality and people might be freed and return to the big family of the People's Republic of China to enjoy the same rights of national equality as all other nationalities in the country and develop their political, economic, cultural and educational work, the Central People's Government, when it ordered the People's Liberation Army to march into Tibet, notified the local government of Tibet to send delegates to the central authorities to conduct talks for the conclusion of an agreement on measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet.

In the latter part of April 1951, the delegates with full powers of the local government of Tibet arrived in Peking. The Central People's Government appointed representatives with full powers to conduct talks on a friendly basis with the delegates with full powers of the local govern-

> ment of Tibet. As a result of these talks, both parties agreed to conclude this agreement and guarantee that it will be carried into effect.

There was no discussion regarding the Preamble. The Tibetan delegation was concerned only with the actual points of the Agreement.

> Point 1. The Tibetan people shall unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet: the Tibet people shall return to the big family of the Motherland—the People's Republic of China.

This point clearly ends Tibet's de facto independence. The Tibetans initially denied that any imperialist forces were operating in Tibet, but the Chinese insisted that the Tibetans just were not aware of them. In the end, the Tibetans agreed to the point, saying, "If they are there then you take them out." The Tibetans assumed this point meant they accepted that Tibet was part of China; however, they believed that the overall agreement had determined that Tibet's internal administration would be left entirely in Tibetan hands.

> Point 2. The local government of Tibet shall actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defense.

There was not much discussion of this since the Chinese said that there was no need to keep a large force on the border when there was no trouble; only if a threat should arise would they send a large force to defend Tibet. The Tibetans then asked what the term *local government* meant, but were somewhat misled because the term was translated into Tibetan as "the government of an area,"[57] obscuring the meaning of *local*. The delegation felt that since this point still used the term *government* (*shung*), Tibet's new status was not fundamentally different from the old one.

> Point 3. In accordance with the policy toward nationalities laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the leadership of the Central People's Government.

57. In Tibetan: *sa gnas gzhung*.

There was discussion concerning the meaning of regional autonomy, but again, since there was to continue to be a "government" in Tibet, the Tibetans had no strong objections to this. Note should be taken that the term for Central People's Government did not use the Tibetan word for central government (*üshung*) but the Chinese term *trunyang*, which the Tibetans took to mean "China."[58]

> Point 4. The central authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. The central authorities also will not alter the established status, functions, and powers of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks shall hold office as usual.

The Tibetans agreed with this.

> Point 5. The established status, functions and powers of the Panchen Ngoerhtehni shall be maintained.

> Point 6. By the established status, functions, and powers of the Dalai Lama and of the Panchen Ngoerhtehni are meant the status, functions and powers of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and of the Ninth Panchen Ngoerhtehni when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other.

The Tibetans objected to the reference to the status, functions, and powers of the Panchen Lama; the Chinese responded by asserting that if the Panchen Lama's rank, functions, and powers were not mentioned in the settlement, those of Dalai Lama should not be mentioned either. They asked the Tibetans whether they wanted to withdraw the Dalai Lama's name as well. The Tibetans conceded the point.

> Point 7. The policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference shall be carried out. The religious beliefs, customs, and habits of the Tibetan People shall be respected, and lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries.

On this point the Tibetan monk officials raised the specific issue of the future of monastic income from estates, since the initial translation of

58. In Tibetan: *üshung* = *dbus gzhung*, and *trunyang* = *krung dbyang*.

the Chinese term was unclear. The Chinese "income of the monasteries" had been translated as "the root for continuing religion."[59] Since this did not exactly convey the meaning "income" to the monk officials, the Chinese translator, Phüntso Wangye, suggested replacing this term with one that clearly meant "income" in Tibetan.[60] This was accepted and the Tibetan delegation expressed itself as satisfied with the guarantees offered regarding religion.

> Point 8. Tibetan troops shall be reorganized by stages into the People's Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defense forces of the People's Republic of China.

The question of the future of the Tibetan army was discussed in detail; with the Tibetans objecting strenuously to its disbanding. The Chinese agreed to a token compromise, but insisted that this should be signed in a separate agreement which would not be published (and thus would not embarrass the Chinese government by revealing that they permitted a part of China to have its own army force). This was the first of several such separate (secret) agreements. It had seven or eight points dealing specifically with the military, the most important of which stated that 3,000 troops of the Gyajong Regiment (i.e., the Trapchi and Bodyguard Regiments) would continue to exist after the rest of the Tibetan forces had been disbanded.

> Point 9. The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality shall be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.

> Point 10. Tibetan agriculture, livestock raising, industry, and commerce shall be developed step by step, and the people's livelihood shall be improved step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.

There was no disagreement regarding these points.

> Point 11. In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central authorities. The local government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people

59. In Tibetan: *chos rgyun gtong rtsa.*
60. In Tibetan: *yongs sgo.*

> raise demands for reform, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet.

This was seen by the Tibetans as one of the most important points in the agreement. In the discussion, the Chinese kept insisting that their government would not force any changes. The Tibetan delegation believed that the Chinese could *never* get the Tibetan people to demand reforms that would alter the basic religious nature of the Tibetan polity. They felt satisfied that so long as the Chinese agreed not to interfere directly, the essence of the traditional system would continue.

> Point 12. In so far as former pro-imperialist and pro-Kuomintang officials resolutely sever relations with imperialism and the Kuomintang and do not engage in sabotage or resistance, they may continue to hold office irrespective of their past.

> Point 13. The People's Liberation Army entering Tibet shall abide by all the above-mentioned policies and shall also be fair in buying and selling and shall not arbitrarily take a single needle or thread from the people.

These were accepted.

> Point 14. The Central People's Government shall conduct the centralized handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet; and there will be peaceful coexistence with neighbouring countries and establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, and mutual respect for territory and sovereignty.

The Tibetans disliked this point but felt they had to agree.

> Point 15. In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People's Government shall set up a military and administrative committee[61] and a military area headquarters in Tibet, and apart from the personnel sent there by the Central People's Government, shall absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work.
>
> Local Tibetan personnel taking part in the military and administrative committee may include patriotic elements from the local government of Tibet, various districts, and leading monasteries; the name list shall be drawn up after consultation between the representatives designated by

61. In Tibetan: *dmag srid u yon lhan khang.*

> the Central People's Government and the various quarters concerned, and shall be submitted to the Central People's Government for appointment.

This point raised the only nasty argument. When the Tibetans asked the purpose of this military and administrative committee, the Chinese responded vaguely that it would do whatever was needed in Tibet to implement the agreement. The Tibetans challenged the Chinese, saying that this conflicted with the points of the agreement that stated that the Peking government would not alter the existing system. This analysis irritated the Chinese, who angrily replied, "Are you saying that you are against China? If that is the case then you can go home, you need not stay. We will send the People's Liberation Army." The Tibetans then tried to calm the Chinese and suggested taking a break. During this period they talked among themselves and decided that they had to acquiesce. Disagreements arose over various other points of the agreement, but this was the only time the Chinese threatened to unleash their army if the Tibetans did not agree to a point. For the Chinese, that particular point was critical since it allowed them to set up their own administrative infrastructure.

> Point 16. Funds needed by the military and administrative committee, the military area headquarters, and the People's Liberation Army entering Tibet shall be provided by the Central People's Government. The local government of Tibet will assist the People's Liberation Army in the purchase and transport of food, fodder, and other daily necessities.

This was accepted.

> Point 17. This agreement shall come into force immediately after signatures and seals are affixed to it.

This last point is important because it implies that the Tibetan delegation had full authority to conclude and sign a treaty. At the very beginning of the talks the Chinese had specifically asked Ngabö whether he had the authority to sign an agreement, and Ngabö told them he did. The Chinese then asked him whether he had the authority to write "with all the power and authority represented by Ngabö Ngawang Jigme." Ngabö said that he did. Again, at the end of the discussions,

the Chinese asked Ngabö whether he was ready to sign, and he replied that he was.[62]

All that remained was to complete the separate (and secret) agreements. The first, as discussed above, contained eight points and dealt with the immediate phasing out of the Tibetan Army except for 3,000 troops. This secret agreement also discussed a Tibetan police force. The Tibetans believed that even though they would lose their right to keep an army, if they could get agreement to maintain a police force it could form the nucleus of an army if necessary. The Chinese asked the Tibetans what size police force they had in mind, and the Tibetans responded that the number would have to fluctuate depending on the situation; for example, as the country developed, the number of police would have to increase. The Chinese finally agreed to this.

A second agreement contained two points dealing with the Dalai Lama. Since it was unclear whether the Dalai Lama would return to Lhasa or go into exile, this agreement said that it was preferable that the Dalai Lama live in Tibet. If, however, he wanted to remain outside Tibet, the Chinese would accept his decision and the agreement would still hold. Also, should the Dalai Lama later return to Tibet, he would assume his full authority and status and functions as before.

There appears to have also been a third secret agreement that dealt with the gradual (rather than immediate) phasing out of Tibetan currency.[63]

After Ngabö and the others agreed to these seventeen points, the Chinese asked them whether they had brought seals to affix to the final document. Although Ngabö had the seal of the governor-general of Kham, he and the others said they had no seals. The Chinese therefore made new seals for each delegate that included only the delegate's proper name. These were used in the final signing.[64]

On 23 May 1951, the agreement was signed by both delegations in the former Imperial Palace. After the signing, the Tibetans met Mao Tse-tung for the first time. He told them, "Now you have signed the

62. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

63. The gist of the secret agreements was reported by Sambo ([Rimshi], interview) and confirmed by Phüntso Tashi (interview).

64. Sambo (Rimshi), interview. Thus, the later claim that the Chinese had *forged* the seal of the Tibetan government is erroneous.

Seventeen-Point Agreement. That is very good. You have accepted to be part of one big family so now Peking is yours and Shanghai is yours. Now the People's Liberation Army will go to Tibet, do you have any doubts?" Ngabö replied, "First when we met [the Chinese] in Chamdo we were doubtful, but now I am quite confident." Mao then answered, "You talk a bit too soon. You will definitely have doubts; it would be very strange if you did not have doubts but there will be a day when your doubts will be cleared away. You will be with the People's Liberation Army so day by day your doubts will be cleared away."[65]

Surprisingly, the Tibetan delegation did not stipulate that they wished to delay the announcement of the agreement until they could inform their own government. Consequently, although work was immediately begun to prepare a telegram for Yatung listing the points of the agreement, the Tibetan government, together with the rest of the world, first heard of the agreement by radio on 26 May.

News of the radio announcement, followed by the arrival of the telegram from Ngabö indicating that secret agreements had also been made, shocked most officials in Yatung. The Kashag sent Ngabö a telegram saying that the agreement seemed unfavorable: Tibet seemed to have lost all its powers. They reminded him that he had been instructed to seek approval from Yatung for major issues and requested that he immediately send copies of the entire agreement and secret notes so that they could examine them and let him know what to do. He was ordered to remain in Peking until he heard from them.[66]

The Tibetan delegation members, however, saw no point in remaining and trying to reopen the negotiations. They wired Yatung: "We cannot send the contents of the separate notes for they will lose their secrecy and that is not good. Therefore, we have decided to leave Peking as we planned and suggest that if the Kashag does not agree with the Agreements we have signed you should send another delegation."[67]

Not long afterward, the five delegates returned to Tibet. Ngabö was told by the Chinese that he had to return by land (since he was too important to risk his defection to a foreign country). The rest were told

65. Ibid.
66. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 108–9.
67. Ibid.

that they could return either by land or air (via India). Thubten Lengmön decided to return with Ngabö; the other three—Sambo, Kheme, and Lhautara—returned via India, arriving on 2 June. They had memorized the agreement and gave a detailed oral report to the government pending Ngabö's arrival with the official documents.[68]

In the Seventeen-Point Agreement Tibet acknowledged Chinese sovereignty for the first time in its history, yet the Tibetan delegation genuinely felt they had done the best they could. If the Chinese adhered strictly to the terms of the new agreement, Tibet would continue to have the freedom to preserve its own religion and culture; the Dalai Lama and other officials would continue in office; and the system of government would be maintained.

The Chinese, however, knew they had won an immense victory. The agreement legalized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet and provided the Chinese with mechanisms for the gradual transformation of the Tibetan local government and the reformation of the social and economic system. This "peaceful" liberation avoided the very negative international criticism that renewed military liberation would probably have produced, and it precluded the possibility of interference from anti-Communist countries such as the United States if fighting was renewed.

But since Ngabö did not have the authority to sign the agreement on behalf of Tibet, all China's gains depended on the reactions of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government. The Chinese could insure that Ngabö remained on Chinese and Tibetan territory, but they could not control the course of action of the Dalai Lama and his government. That reaction will be examined in the next chapter.

68. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

21

THE DALAI LAMA RETURNS TO LHASA

In March 1951, U.S. involvement in Tibetan affairs took a dramatic upturn. At the same time that the Yatung negotiating team was en route to Peking, James Burke of *Time/Life* brought Heinrich Harrer, an Austrian who had fled from internment in India to Tibet seven years earlier, to see Ambassador Henderson in India.

FURTHER UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT WITH TIBET

Harrer had just returned to India from Yatung and was very close to the Dalai Lama and his family. Wanting to secure American support for the Tibetans, Harrer told Henderson that the Dalai Lama very much needed advice and that he trusted the United States more than any other country. Harrer said that the Dalai Lama had been frustrated by Tibet's inability to establish close relations with the United States and was sending the mission to Peking only with great reluctance and in fear that they might yield to Chinese pressure. Harrer also said that the young ruler had doubts about the wisdom of returning to Lhasa but that he was under constant pressure from some of the monks around him, who insisted he come to terms with China. Harrer said that the

Dalai Lama did not know which way to turn for advice, and that the United States should try to convey their interest to him.[1]

Henderson believed Harrer, in no small part because he was already convinced that the United States should assist Tibet more actively. Feeling that "unless someone in whom this young man might have confidence should give him advice, he will fall into the Chinese Communist trap, or he will be in an extremely unenviable position in India," Henderson decided to send the Dalai Lama an unofficial and unsigned letter which would be accompanied by a verbal message saying that the letter had come from the U.S. ambassador. To protect the United States in case the letter fell into the hands of the Chinese, he used paper, purchased in India, whose origin could not be traced, and he included nothing in the text that would indicate that the letter came from Henderson or the United States. Henderson justified his action to the State Department by contending that it was better to take this risk than to see the "Chinese Communists succeed by trickery in taking over Tibet and in gaining control of the Dalai Lama."[2] Henderson's message, which follows, strongly urged the Dalai Lama to oppose the Chinese and seek support abroad. It is notable in that it suggested Ceylon as a place of asylum for the Dalai Lama, while also, for the first time, offering the United States as a possible asylum site.

[NEW DELHI, undated]

> A high foreign official who has recently visited Asia and who has sympathy for Tibet and deep concern for the welfare of His Holiness and His people sends the following message:
>
> 1. The Peiping Communist regime is determined to obtain complete control over Tibet. No concession made to that regime by His Holiness can change this determination. The Chinese Communists prefer to gain control through trickery rather than through force. They are therefore anxious to persuade His Holiness to make an agreement which would allow them to establish a representative in Lhasa.
>
> 2. The establishment of a representative of Peiping Communist re-

1. USFR, New Delhi Post File, lot 58F 95, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. State Department's director of the Office of South Asia Affairs, dated 29 March 1951.
2. Ibid.

gime in Lhasa would serve only to speed up the seizing of all of Tibet by the Chinese Communists.

3. Until changes in the world situation would make it difficult for the Chinese Communists to take over Tibet, His Holiness should in no circumstances return to Lhasa or send his own treasures or those of Tibet back to Lhasa. [A section has been excised by the U.S. State Department.] Any treasures which might be returned to Lhasa would eventually be taken over by the Chinese Communists.

4. His Holiness should not return to Lhasa while the danger exists that by force or trickery the Chinese Communists might seize Lhasa. He should leave Yatung for some foreign country if it should [?seem] like the Chinese Communists might try to prevent his escape.

5. It is suggested that His Holiness send representatives at once to Ceylon. These representatives should try to arrange with the Government of Ceylon for the immediate transfer to Ceylon of the treasures of His Holiness. They should also try to obtain permission for His Holiness and His Household to find asylum in Ceylon if His Holiness should leave Tibet. After the Government of Ceylon has granted permission for asylum, His Holiness should ask the Government of India for assurance that if he and His Household should leave Tibet they could pass through India to Ceylon.

6. If His Holiness and His Household could not find safe asylum in Ceylon he could be certain of finding a place of refuge in one of the friendly countries, including the United States, in the Western Hemisphere.

7. It might also be useful for His Holiness to send a mission to the United States where it would be prepared to make a direct appeal to the United Nations. It is understood that His Holiness is already aware that favorable consideration will be granted to the applications made by members of a Tibetan mission to the United Nations for United States visas.[3]

3. USFR, New Delhi Post File, lot 58F 95, memorandum of conversation dated 13 May 1951. Henderson sent a copy of his letter to the Dalai Lama to the U.S. ambassador in Ceylon on 30 March (USFR, 793B.00/3-3051, letter from L. Henderson to J. C. Satterthwaite, dated 30 March 1951). Satterthwaite replied that he thought the Ceylon government would be "very glad indeed to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama if he should request it, and to place his treasures in safekeeping even if he himself should not wish to leave Tibet" (USFR, FW 793B.11/4-1351, letter from Satterthwaite to Henderson, dated 13 April 1951).

By April, 1951 the climate in the State Department had changed sufficiently that Henderson's letter was approved, with the proviso that paragraph 7 be deleted because a recent survey by the State Department had revealed that there was little support among member countries for U.N. action on behalf of Tibet. Henderson sent duplicate copies of this letter to the Dalai Lama on 6 April. One copy was sent to Calcutta, where the two heads of the Tibetan trade mission (the secret military mission) were asked to deliver it personally to the Dalai Lama at Yatung.[4] The Tibetan trade mission officials were unable or unwilling to do this; the record shows that this copy still had not been sent to Yatung by 13 May, when the U.S. Embassy's first secretary, Fraser Wilkins, personally handed the copy to the Tibetan foreign secretary, Liushar, in Kalimpong.[5] Receipt of the second copy was acknowledged by the Dalai Lama in a letter to Henderson dated 21 May, but the date of its delivery is unknown, and the State Department has excised the name of the courier from the U.S. documents.[6]

Henderson also took the occasion of Liushar's visit to India in May 1951 to convey U.S. interest in Tibet directly, by sending Wilkins to Kalimpong to meet with him. In a memorandum of the conversation at that meeting, Wilkins says that he

> assured the Foreign Secretary that the United States was greatly interested in Tibet not only economically but politically and cited as two examples of American interest the statements that the United States was interested in the continuance of Tibetan autonomy and viewed sympathetically Tibet's appeal to the United Nations. Furthermore, the United States had indicated that it was willing to give consideration to the issuance of visas to the Tibetan Delegation which had been scheduled to

4. USFR, 791.00/4-451, telegram no. 2673 from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 4 April 1951; and telegram no. 1633 from the director of the U.S. State Department's Office of Southeast Asia Affairs to the U.S. ambassador in India, dated 6 April 1951.

5. USFR, New Delhi Post File, lot 58F 95, memorandum of conversation dated 13 May 1951.

6. U.S. Foreign Relations 1951, volume 7, p. 1721, 793B.00/6-2851, the chargé d'affaires in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 28 June 1951. The Dalai Lama's letter acknowledges Henderson's letter, states that peace negotiations between China and Tibet are proceeding in Peking, and says that if Tibet should have to approach the United States again, the Dalai Lama hopes the United States will do its best to help.

> proceed to Lake Success. I [Wilkins] recalled that Ambassador Henderson had written letters to this effect on January 5 and January 11.[7]

Liushar replied that the Tibetan government appreciated the American interest but that on the advice of India, the United Kingdom, and the United States, they had already begun negotiations with the Chinese. He explained that his government feared that sending a delegation to Lake Success might have adverse effects on these talks, so they had placed that plan in abeyance.[8]

Wilkins said the United States had not advised Tibet to negotiate with the Chinese and suggested that a Tibetan delegation at Lake Success might have focused world attention and possibly deterred Communist Chinese activity. Liushar responded that while the United States had not advised Tibet in so many words to negotiate, it and other Western countries had refused to help when Tibet requested assistance. Liushar pointed out that the United Nations had not invited Tibet to appear and present its case and said that this was seen as a further indication that Tibet's best hope to maintain her independence was through negotiation with China.[9]

Two days later, Liushar and Wilkins again met. This time Liushar poignantly presented the Tibetan hopes and fears regarding the negotiations that were going on in Peking. Wilkins wrote of this meeting:

> The Foreign Secretary indicated that, if necessary, they would probably settle for autonomy in internal affairs but that what Tibet really desired was a maintenance of the status-quo which had existed prior to the Chinese invasion of Tibet. They hoped they would not have to retreat to their minimum position but if they did he believed they would in the course of time again be able to assert complete Tibetan supremacy over all of their affairs. The Foreign Secretary recalled that in the past, whatever the legal situation might have been, Tibet was in effect independent. It had all the attributes of sovereignty except recognition by foreign

7. Memorandum of conversation between F. Wilkins and Liushar on relations between Tibet and the United States, dated 12 May 1951, enclosed with USFR, 611.93B/5-2451, letter from F. Wilkins, U.S. Embassy in India, to the U.S. Department of State, dated 24 May 1951.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

> powers. They hoped one day to recover their full sovereignty and recognition from foreign powers as well.[10]

About a week later, just before news of the Sino-Tibetan agreement was made public on 26 May, a more significant meeting took place between Wilkins and Shakabpa in Calcutta. Shakabpa told the U.S. Consulate that he had been sent by the Dalai Lama to reopen discussions with the United States and ascertain precisely what kind of help Tibet could expect from the United States. Shakabpa informed Wilkins that on 13 May the talks in China had been almost deadlocked and asked him for the U.S. government's advice on what Tibet should do "when Tibetan-Communist talks at Peking broke down."[11] Shakabpa said that the Chinese wanted control over all of Tibet, including military and external affairs, and that while the Tibetan government was willing to concede this for Inner Tibet (the area east of the Yangtse River), they were not willing to do so for Outer Tibet, the area controlled by the Dalai Lama. Shakabpa went on to say that the Dalai Lama was adamant about not ceding control over Tibet's defense, and that if he were forced to leave Tibet, he would do so immediately. Shakabpa added that foreign secretary Liushar was on his way to Yatung to discuss the letter Ambassador Henderson had sent to the Dalai Lama. Shakabpa then listed *six* specific questions he said he and the foreign secretary needed answered:

> (1) Should Tibet report to the UN when current talks break down and how should they do it? Was the UN still interested in Tibet and could it be of any help? What would the US do? Would it be willing to grant visas?
>
> (2) As Tibet had no official relations with Ceylon, would the US be willing to approach the Government Ceylon re asylum for Dalai Lama and his followers?
>
> (3) Would the US be willing grant asylum to the Dalai Lama and approximately 100 followers? How would he be received? As head of state? Would the US be willing provide for their expenses?

10. Memorandum of conversation between F. Wilkins, Liushar and G. Patterson, dated 13 May 1951, enclosed with USFR, 611.93B/5-2451, letter from F. Wilkins, U.S. Embassy in India, to the U.S. Department of State, dated 24 May 1951. The interpreter was Kapshöba's son Döndrup.

11. This communication was apparently in reference to the issue of the acceptance of the Chinese and Tashilhunpo candidate as the Panchen Lama.

(4) If Dalai Lama leaves Tibet would the US be willing supply the Dalai Lama with military assistance and loans of money when the time was ripe for the purpose enabling of Tibetan groups to rise against the Communist Chinese invader? Money was needed to encourage groups.

(5) Would the US be willing establish some form of representation at Kalimpong for liaison between US officials and Tibetan authorities? Shakabpa stressed the necessity for representation which would be informal and covert in character.

(6) The Dalai Lama wished his elder brother, Takster Rimpoche, to leave Tibet and visit India. Takster's opposition to Communist China following his arrival in Lhasa from Kumbum monastery has made it difficult for him to remain Tibet and face possible Communist Chinese criticism. In the event Takster could not remain India for similar reasons, could Takster and Tibetan servant proceed to the US in an unofficial capacity?[12]

Shakabpa was told that Ambassador Henderson would be consulted immediately and that answers would be sent to him in Kalimpong. Virtually simultaneously with this, of course, on 26 May the Chinese announced that the "Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" had been signed in Peking on 23 May.[13] Tibetan attention immediately focused on the merits and validity of the Seventeen-Point Agreement, with its repeated references to Tibet's returning to the great motherland of China. The next two months would be spent in heated debate and delicate secret negotiations aimed at deciding whether the Dalai Lama should accept the agreement and return to Lhasa, or denounce it, go into exile, and launch a political and military struggle against the Communists.

FOREIGN REACTION TO THE SEVENTEEN-POINT AGREEMENT

A few days after Peking announced the Sino-Tibetan agreement, the Department of State asked the U.S. Embassy in Delhi to find out from

12. USFR, 793B.00/5-2951, telegram no. 3398 from the U.S. chargé d'affaires, L. V. Steere, in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 29 May 1951.

13. USFR, 893B.13/5-2651, telegram no. 2015 from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. Embassy in India, dated 29 May, 1951.

Tibetan officials in Kalimpong whether such an agreement had actually been reached and if so, what course the Tibetan government proposed to take regarding its acceptance and implementation.[14] A week later, on 1 June, Shakabpa did not comment on this but told the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta the Tibetan government was anxiously awaiting the U.S. reply to the Dalai Lama's six questions and explained how a U.S. representative could meet Shakabpa secretly after dark in Kalimpong. The Americans saw this as a good sign, since it indicated that the Tibetan government was still considering opposing the Chinese.[15]

The following day, Secretary of State Dean Acheson replied positively to the Dalai Lama's questions. After indicating that the State Department would reserve final judgment until they had received conclusive information on the Peking agreement, Acheson instructed Henderson as follows:

> Tibet SHLD not RPT NOT be compelled by duress accept violation its autonomy and that Tibetan people SHLD enjoy certain rights self-determination, commensurate with autonomy Tibet has maintained since Chi revolution. DEPT believes further that cause world peace WLD be served if gen support CLD be mustered for this point of view, and agrees with EMB that US RPT US itself SHLD demonstrate its interest in case in every practical POLIT and ECON way. Assuming Peiping terms inacceptable established Tibetan GOVT and combined POLIT and MIL pressure may be exerted on Tibet, DEPT accepts EMB suggestions contained REFTEL, SUBJ GEN proviso US is not RPT NOT assuming responsibility guidance Tibetan GOVT, with fol qualifications.[16]

These so-called qualifications were the responses to the Dalai Lama's six questions. Acheson instructed Henderson that:

14. Ibid. The U.S. State Department believed that the Dalai Lama could disavow the agreement on various grounds even if its delegates had been under no duress while in Peking (international law defined duress as one party's applying *direct* physical threat to the delegates of the other party so as to force them to sign an agreement—the threat of invasion is, therefore, not sufficient to claim duress).

15. USFR, 793B.00/6-151, telegram no. 3439 from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 1 June 1951.

16. USFR, 793B.00/5-2951, telegram no. 2051 from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. Embassy in India, dated 2 June 1951.

[1. Regarding the United Nations]

US believes that when complaint is made to UN, there SHLD be opportunity have it heard and considered in proper UN forum. US RPT US has not however been chief moving party in every case, and degree US initiative necessarily has taken into account attitude other UN members and their special relation to issue raised. In this case GOI interests particularly involved. While US RPT US willing support consideration new Tibetan appeal, US believes attitude other UN members important factor in situation. Tibet might consider setting forth in new MSG to UN SYG [secretary-general] circumstances NEGOTS Peiping and nature Commie threat re Tibet. US believes new Tibetan appeal to UN, followed promptly by Tibetan efforts interest other leading States such as UK, India, Pakistan, France, USSR in support WLD probably be more fruitful approach than first sending DEL to UN RPT UN (this especially in view importance time element). If Tibet CLD mobilize some influential world opinion in support its case, this might create POLIT environment favoring UN consideration. US WLD agree issue visas to Tibetan DEL to UN RPT UN. Whether and when Tibetan DEL might undertake travel UN is for them determine.

[2. Regarding the United States contacting Ceylon for asylum]

Agree *in toto.*

[3. Regarding asylum and financing for the Dalai Lama and 100 followers (and their families)]

US unable commit itself to providing for expenses Dalai Lama and retinue. Note precedents such as Tsarist refugees and, more recently, CHI Vice President Li Tsung-jen, all of whom unsupported by US. Note Tibetan GOVT by all reports possesses much treasure including gold and silver. We assume those assets ample for purpose and Dalai Lama himself WLD arrange to EVAC from Tibet such treasure as required for support his GOVT in exile. Omit in UR reply any suggestion US willing consider what financial assistance CLD be given or that US WLD QTE do utmost help Tibetans solve financial problems, UNQTE but suggest Dalai Lama WLD probably best be able serve cause Tibetan freedom if he remained nearby as in India or Ceylon.

[4. Regarding willingness to supply the Dalai Lama with military assistance and funds to enable uprisings against the Chinese]

US prepared provide limited assistance in terms light arms depending upon POLIT and MIL developments in Tibet proper, and depending also on whether GOI attitude WLD make such supply feasible. US

GOVMT feels aid CLD effectively be given only while there may be within Tibet POLIT and MIL forces willing and able resist, that complete collapse within Tibet and offering of POLIT campaign from outside wld render undertaking probably fruitless. Strong stand by Tibetan Govt against any clear aggression WLD encourage world support for its position, whereas surrender in Outer Tibet WLD almost certainly be followed by collapse interest elsewhere. US unwilling commit itself to support any such undertaking from outside, but if resistance maintained in Tibet from beginning WLD contribute insofar as attitude GOI makes it possible. Have Tibetans recently approached GOI re providing arms or permitting shipment through India and if so with what results?

[5. Regarding a liaison between Tibetan and United States officials in Kalimpong]

US willing have informal contact at Darjeeling and Kalimpong when useful. Such contact WLD of course have no RPT no representative character in absence US official relations with Tibet.

[6. Regarding Takster Rimpoche]

Visitors visas CLD probably be arranged for Takster and servant proceed US if unable remain India or Ceylon (either of which WLD be preferable politically), FYI it being assumed he WLD of course himself bear expenses. [Dean Acheson ended with the following instructions and observations:]

DEPT agrees it important at this stage particularly that US respond in cooperative manner Shakabpa's questions. PLS evince that sympathetic attitude, indicating US GOVT prepared do everything feasible assist Tibet maintain autonomy, but note high importance which position GOI bears re developments.

Tibetans themselves will appreciate high desirability, in view historical and actual POLIT relations, that if possible Tibet enlist support GOI. US under no illusions that current attitude GOI is more sympathetic to Tibet cause than shown by actions to date. Dept does not RPT not propose Tibetans approach GOI or accept GOI opinion against better judgment. US itself WLD be guided by own judgment re situation and possibilities, is sympathetic to Tibetan cause as indicated above but WLD merely note ineluctable fact India by reasons of traditional relationships and geographic position plays very important role. Tibetans SHLD be under no RPT no illusions likewise that MIL assistance can be obtained for them through UN RPT UN action. Tibetans must necessarily be guided by consideration all factors and by their interests as autonomous people.

> FYI although considering resistance WLD bear promise of fruits only if Tibetan POLIT organization can be caused make stand in OUTER Tibet, believe it important Dalai Lama not RPT not let himself come under control Peiping. US RPT US is sympathetic to Tibetan position and will assist insofar as practicable but can help only if Tibetans themselves make real effort and take firm stand.[17]

This new U.S. position did not offer much concrete support, but it did hold out the possibility of the Dalai Lama and his leading officials receiving asylum in the United States.[18]

The U.S. Embassy in Delhi sent Wilkins to Kalimpong to report these answers to Shakabpa and to ascertain the status of the Seventeen-Point Agreement. He arrived there on 7 or 8 June and, after explaining the position taken by the United States, impressed on Shakabpa that it was predicated on the assumption that the Seventeen-Point Agreement was unacceptable to the Tibetan government and would be disavowed.

Shakabpa then told Wilkins that a telegram from the Dalai Lama had said that he and the Tibetan government did not recognize the Sino-Tibetan agreement and that the Tibetan delegation had been forced by pressure and threats to sign it. He also informed Wilkins that the Peking delegation had been instructed to refer all important points back to Yatung and thus had no authority to ratify such an agreement. Shakabpa further speculated that after all of the delegation members had left China and were out of danger, the Chinese would be informed that the agreement was unacceptable.[19]

Shakabpa and Wilkins met a second time the next day. At this meeting Shakabpa told Wilkins that he had just received an urgent message from the Dalai Lama that indicated that all these issues were currently being discussed in Yatung. The message said, "If US willing to help, you [Shakabpa] shld make arrangements for my departure from Yatung, for India immediately; if US unwilling to help, you should return Yatung at once." Shakabpa told Wilkins that he was very pleased with

17. Ibid.

18. Shakabpa and the Tibetans were strongly opposed to seeking asylum in Thailand, another country suggested by the U.S., on the grounds that Thailand not only had Chinese troops in the north and was too close to China, but was also too unstable.

19. USFR, 793B.00/6-1151, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 11 June 1951.

the U.S. replies and was certain that the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government would also be pleased. He said he would inform the Dalai Lama at once of the U.S. offer and that he thought that it could affect the outcome of the debate in Yatung.[20]

Shakabpa also told Wilkins that the Tibetan government considered it preferable to postpone any further appeal to the United Nations until after the Dalai Lama's public disavowal of the Seventeen-Point Agreement and until after the Dalai Lama had reached India. Shakabpa again asked the Americans to contact the Ceylon government informally regarding asylum for the Dalai Lama, because Tibet had no relations with Ceylon and it would be difficult for Tibet to contact Ceylon without the Indian government immediately hearing about it and possibly taking offense. Wilkins said that the United States would approach Ceylon.

Shakabpa then reiterated that the Dalai Lama and 100 to 200 followers and their families would prefer asylum in the United States, and said that he considered the willingness of the United States to receive the Dalai Lama as one of the most important points in the U.S. response. Shakabpa also pressed Wilkins again for more specific information on military assistance and on the issue of possible U.S. help through loans.

Finally, Shakabpa asked Wilkins whether it would be possible for a representative of the United States to remain in Kalimpong for the next few weeks, since many important questions were likely to arise. Wilkins replied that he would try to arrange something, and the U.S. Embassy soon afterward sent Vice-Consul N. G. Thacher from the Calcutta Consulate with his wife and son—ostensibly on a vacation, but actually to deal with the Tibetans.[21]

Shakabpa met with Thacher on 15 June in Kalimpong and told him that he had received no new word about the Dalai Lama denouncing the Seventeen-Point Agreement. Thacher in turn passed on to Shakabpa the news that the Chinese delegation could arrive in Tibet as early as 22 June; he stressed that it was important that the Dalai Lama

20. The message is reported in ibid.
21. Ibid.

disavow the Sino-Tibetan agreement before then.[22] Shakabpa's optimism was not shared, however, by many other Tibetans, including Liushar, who told the Americans that he was pessimistic about the likelihood of a strong opposition to the Seventeen-Point Agreement.[23]

In the meantime, Taktse Rimpoche arrived in Kalimpong with a secret letter from the Dalai Lama that reiterated that he would appreciate U.S. help in arranging for his brother Taktse to go to America and that he desired close relations with the United States. It also said that Taktse Rimpoche could speak for him.[24] Eager to make the Dalai Lama an overture of friendship, the U.S. Embassy quickly recommended that the State Department approve Taktse's visit to the United States and permit him to enter the United States with an affidavit in lieu of a passport, since further documentation from Yatung would take months. It recommended that the U.S. Embassy should help him financially. This was approved on 18 June.[25]

By mid-June, therefore, the Americans had received no reply from the Dalai Lama regarding their proposals and the Seventeen-Point Agreement, although Shakabpa and Taktse Rimpoche had indicated that the Dalai Lama was in favor of the United States and of denouncement of the agreement. With the Chinese delegation due to arrive in India soon, the Americans decided to sweeten their offer to the Dalai Lama by indicating more clearly than before that they would render public support if the Tibetans denounced the agreement. This was conveyed by the State Department to the acting ambassador in India on 16 June:

> You may inform Tibetans, if and when you consider desirable, that upon disavowal Sino-Tibetan agreement US official reference to this action,

22. USFR, 793B.00/6-1951, telegram no. 3687 from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 19 June 1951; USFR, 793B.00/6-2551, telegram no. 3687 from the U.S. consul-general at Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 25 June 1951.

23. USFR, 793B.00/6-1151, telegram no. 3576 from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 11 June 1951.

24. Ibid.

25. USFR, 793B.00/6-1351, telegram no. 3616 from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 13 June 1951; and 793B.00/6-1351, telegram no. 2194 from the U.S. State Department to the U.S. Embassy in India, dated 18 June 1951.

> indicating sympathy for Tibetan position, cld be expected. Tenor and timing of any comment wld depend on character Tibetan announcement.
> It is considered undesirable that US GOVT publicly introduce UN question in advance Tibetans own action this regard.[26]

The United States also informed the British that America was not ready to "appease" India and was content to suffer a deterioration in relations with that country, if need be. This action, it felt, was justified by the need to counter Communist aggression.[27]

Thacher again met with Shakabpa and told him the new information, which Shakabpa said he would pass on to Yatung at once. He also informed Thacher that almost all high Tibetan officials in India had been summoned to Yatung; apparently an important meeting was being held.[28] On 26 June, Shakabpa and Thacher had a lengthy conversation of which Thacher wrote a detailed report. This report reveals the concerns of the Tibetans at Yatung:

> *Conversation with Shakabpa and Jigme Tering* [Taring, the translator]
> I had called earlier in the day on Shakabpa and we arranged for him to come with Tering to Rinking Farm that evening. I told them first about the message I had received that afternoon from Calcutta. This message stated that the Chinese and Tibetan delegations had been delayed by floods and were still in China.
> Next I touched on our eagerness to receive all available information from Yatung or Lhasa, whether of major importance or not. I pointed out that the more of such information we had to relay to Washington, the more convincing evidence we would have of the Tibetan Government's genuine desire to cooperate and resist. Shakabpa declared, however, that he still had no definite information as to what the Tibetan Government would do. I then asked him whether he had yet been able to send to Yatung the declaration regarding the U.S. Government's intentions which I had given him on June 19. Shakabpa stated this message had already gone to Yatung. When I inquired whether he knew what

26. USFR, 793B.00/6-1551, telegram from the U.S. State Department to the U.S. Embassy in India, dated 16 June 1951.
27. FO371/92997, telegram from the United Kingdom Embassy in Washington, D.C., to the British Foreign Office, dated 25 June 1951.
28. USFR, 793B.00/6-2851, telegram no. 548 from the U.S. consul in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 28 June 1951.

definite plans the Tibetan Government had for notifying the government of India in anticipation of the issuance of a statement by the Dalai Lama, he stated he did not know what arrangements had been made. I asked whether perhaps this might be done through Dayal [Political Officer in Sikkim] but Shakabpa had no clear idea that Dayal would be the proper person. I repeated again the suggestions made in our discussion of June 19 re: the desirability of working out means for prior notification of the Chinese, American, Indian and British Governments prior to the issuance of the statement as means of stirring the GOI into awareness of the Chinese Communists' aggressive intentions toward Tibet.

Shakabpa then mentioned that he had received requests from the Tibetan Government in Yatung for information on five points. We discussed these at some length and I gave my answers on the questions involved and in each case Shakabpa declared that the answers he had already sent to Yatung were in substantial agreement with my views.

(1) The first question raised inquired whether it was thought that the GOI would not allow the Dalai Lama to transit India on his way to the U.S.A. I said I did not see how India could possibly object to the Dalai Lama's passing through on his way somewhere else. I could not of course say whether or nor the GOI would permit the Dalai Lama to stay in India. I took the opportunity of mentioning that we felt the Dalai Lama should consider India as the most desirable refuge, then Thailand, then Ceylon. If the Dalai Lama could stay in none of these places then the United States Government would be glad to have him. I pointed out that our attitude on this [was] dictated by the desirability of having the Dalai Lama stay near his own territory and in areas where his religious position would provide him with a reverent and sympathetic reception from the local residents. I explained the Department of State's reasons for suggesting Thailand as preferable to Ceylon. I emphasized that our views did not denote any unwillingness or reluctance to receive the Dalai Lama, but simply that we felt his influence and effectiveness would be greater if he stayed among persons who revered him for his religious leadership and where he was closer to his own people.

(2) The second question raised by the Tibetan Government was whether aid from the U.S. Government would be directed simply toward assisting the Dalai Lama's flight or whether some aid might also be forthcoming for resistance. I replied that certainly the U.S. Government was willing to help both. I emphasized, however, if the Tibetan Government could provide definite evidence that some of its and the Dalai Lama's

private resources were being drawn upon and that definite efforts were being made to translate this treasure into usable assets, then the U.S. Government would be more willing to help. However, I pointed out that it was not reasonable to expect the U.S. Government to carry the whole burden if the Dalai Lama had some means to help himself. Our intention, however, was definitely to give assistance [to] the Tibetan people if it could be worked out.

(3) The Tibetan Government had inquired of Shakabpa whether he thought aid would be given "openly or surreptitiously." To this I replied that it was conceivable that aid could be arranged to reach the Dalai Lama in whatever place of refuge he chose, without public knowledge. It was difficult, however, to imagine how the Tibetan Government and people could be aided without the knowledge and consent of the GOI. This brought us back once more to the whole question of the vital nature of India's position and the necessity of securing its consent before the U.S. Government could do anything really effective.

(4) The Tibetan Government had inquired whether the U.S. Government would give any assistance if the Tibetan Government should announce that it would accept the Chinese Communists' terms. I stated that we regarded the Tibetan Government's disavowal of the terms as the first and most important step in opening the way for U.S. assistance and toward arousing India to dangers involved. I was not prepared to say that the United States would give no assistance if Tibet accepted the Chinese terms but it seemed that the chances of aid materializing under such circumstances were rather slight. Shakabpa stated that he had informed the Tibetan Government there would be "no hope" of aid if Tibet accepted the Chinese terms.

This opened the entire question of the Tibetan action with regard to the Chinese terms. Shakabpa pointed out that necessarily the Tibetan Government was fearful of a strong reaction from the Chinese Communists and of danger to Tibet were it to disavow the Chinese announcement re the terms. I pointed out that Tibet was faced with two difficult alternatives: one was to make vigorous resistance to China, while the other alternative involved an attempt to cooperate with China. I outlined as clearly as I could the fate of people who tried to cooperate with the Communists, and emphasized that the Panchen Lama, who was now trying to cooperate with the Chinese, would eventually be brushed aside as would the Dalai Lama himself if he stayed in Tibet. That I should think such a fate awaited the Panchen Lama surprised Shakabpa consid-

> erably. I outlined as vividly as I could what had happened where the Communists had taken over in other areas (mentioned events in Czechoslovakia, China, Poland, etc.).
>
> I wondered whether the Tibetan government was seriously considering acceptance of the Chinese terms and whether this was connected with some other scheme of hidden resistance. Shakabpa said he knew of no such scheme.
>
> (5) If the Dalai Lama should decide to go to the U.S.A., how would he be received? I emphasized again our feelings about where the Dalai Lama should go—Thailand, Ceylon, etc., but said the Dalai Lama would be received as great religious leader and as temporal leader of autonomous state, but without deciding question of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. We could make no action in this respect until Tibet decided to declare its own complete independence from China. This gave me an opportunity to emphasize again that some signs of vigorous action and vigorous resistance by the Tibetan Government was of the utmost importance. The U.S. Government's policy must be one of only helping those who would help themselves.
>
> I asked Shakabpa what would happen if the U.S. Government suddenly placed 50,000 rifles at the disposal of the Tibetan Government in Kalimpong. Shakabpa talked of using them [in] guerrilla warfare rather than in open fighting. He was, however, aware of no very clear plans.
>
> Finally I asked Shakabpa about relationship between Taktser [Taktse Rimpoche] and the Dalai Lama. He endorsed former highly—said he was very much in confidence of the latter.[29]

Two days later Thacher informed Shakabpa that the Chinese and Tibetan delegation had arrived in Hong Kong on the twenty-sixth; Shakabpa promised to relay the news at once to Yatung.[30]

The Dalai Lama's continued failure to reply led the Americans to speculate that he might not be free to make decisions, a speculation which was strengthened when Taktse Rimpoche told the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta that the Dalai Lama: (1) certainly did not approve of the Sino-Tibetan agreement; (2) would very likely make a statement disavowing the agreement before the Chinese arrived in India; (3)

29. USFR, 793B.00/7-251, Report of conversation of vice-consul N. G. Thacher with Shakabpa and Jigme Tering [Taring] on 26 June 1951, dated 2 July 1951.
30. USFR, 793B.00/7-251, extract from letter dated 29 June from N. G. Thacher.

would definitely leave Tibet before the Chinese and Tibetan delegates arrived in Tibet; and (4) preferred to seek asylum in the United States.[31] He raised the same set of questions that had been asked earlier by Shakabpa regarding the nature of U.S. support in the event that the Dalai Lama left Tibet, and he commented freely that many around him were opposed to such a move.[32] The United States asked Taktse to convey to the Dalai Lama once again, through a trusted messenger, the complete U.S. position.[33] On 28 June Taktse sent a coded telegram, as well as a secret letter, in which he urged his brother to act.[34]

The American position met with little enthusiasm in India and Britain. On 11 June 1951, G. S. Bajpai informally expressed the Indian position, reiterating India's earlier decision to avoid any military or diplomatic confrontation that could prove prejudicial to Indian relations with China. Bajpai also indicated that if the Dalai Lama decided to leave Tibet and ask for asylum in India, his request would be granted,[35] but that this asylum would *not* be "political asylum" of a sort in which the Dalai Lama could function as the head of a government-in-exile, but would, rather, be a "humanitarian" gesture to an *individual* who would not be allowed to engage in political activity while in India. India had written off Tibet and planned simply to watch the ensuing events with regret. The British high commissioner also reported that the Indian government was strongly opposed to United States involvement.[36]

The British Foreign Office, too, continued their policy of yielding

31. USFR, 793B.00/6-2651, telegram no. 541 from the U.S. consul in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 26 June 1951.

32. USFR, 793.00/6-1151, State Department internal memorandum, dated 2 July 1951; and USFR, 793B.00/7-951, comment in telegram from the U.S. consul in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 9 July 1951.

33. USFR, 793B.00/6-2651, telegram no. 541 from the U.S. consul in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 26 June 1951.

34. USFR, 793B.00/7-351, telegram no. 13 from the U.S. consul in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 3 July 1951; and 793B.00/7-251, U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, cited in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1951, vol. 7, p. 1728, footnote 1. Taktse Rimpoche declined to comment on his dealings with the United States.

35. FO371/92996, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 11 June 1951.

36. FO371/92997, telegram from the United Kingdom high commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 18 June 1951.

all initiative to India and trying to discourage the United States from supporting Tibet. For example, on 18 June, in response to the U.S. willingness to issue a statement of support for a Tibetan disavowal of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement, the British told the State Department that they hoped Tibet would not appeal to the United Nations and that the United States would consult the Indian government about their plans and attitudes. The British told the State Department that continued failure to consult India would further strain relations and might even "result in Nehru washing his hands entirely of [the] Tibetan problem."[37] R. H. Scott, head of the British Southeast Asia Department of the Foreign Office, informed the Americans on 19 June that he thought the American suggestions were cynical from the Tibetan point of view and dangerous from the point of view of American/Indian relations. Scott argued that "the result of encouraging the Tibetans to denounce the Sino-Tibetan agreement would be to provide American publicists with some propaganda points, but not aid the Tibetans effectively." He thought that the U.S. Embassy should consult the Indian government and weigh their views carefully before embarking on this "propaganda stunt."[38]

Furthermore, on 25 June the British Embassy in Washington informed the State Department that the high commissioner in Delhi, Sir Archibald Nye, felt that: "(1) no resistance on the part of Tibet could possibly be successful. (2) One of the principles which motivated GOI was opposition to any action which might worsen relations with Communist China. (4) GOI would not be pleased to see a US involvement in Tibet. (5) India would not be likely to think an appeal to the UN on the part of the Dalai Lama useful and therefore would not support making such an appeal."[39] The significance of the United States' willingness to support the Tibetan cause regardless of British and Indian desires or attitudes was not missed by the perceptive Scott of the British Foreign Office, who wrote: "This is an important land-

37. Ibid.

38. FO371/92997, comment by R. H. Scott on minute by J. A. Murray, dated 21 June 1951.

39. USFR, 793B.00/6-2551, memorandum of conversation between R. H. Belcher, first secretary of the British Embassy and D. D. Kennedy, acting director of the Office of South Asian Affairs, dated 25 June 1951.

mark in Tibetan history. If, under American encouragement, the Dalai Lama repudiates the Peking agreement, a heavy responsibility will fall on the United States authorities and we should at least try to secure that the Dalai Lama goes into voluntary exile in India rather than that he should attempt a futile resistance campaign without Indian support."[40]

U.S. expectations of the Dalai Lama taking a strong stand against the Chinese Communists received a severe setback on 1 July when Shakabpa informed them that the Dalai Lama planned to hold further discussions with the Chinese Communist delegation *in Yatung* before he issued a statement on the agreement or went to India. Shakabpa also indicated that the Chinese would find a friendly reception in Yatung.[41] Wilson, the American consul-general in Calcutta, reported to Acheson: "This of course [is a] serious blow although still possible in our view for DL [Dalai Lama] to act after Chi del in Yatung."[42] Meanwhile, in Calcutta on 2 July Taktse Rimpoche received a reply from the Dalai Lama advising him *not* to go to the United States, presumably because this would irritate the Chinese. Taktse telegraphed back urging the Dalai Lama to disavow the agreement and leave Tibet at once.[43] However, as no statement issued from Yatung, Taktse became less optimistic and commented that the Dalai Lama was surrounded by Communist sympathizers and agents who might obtain control at any time.[44]

In early July the United States tried again to contact the Dalai Lama directly. A secret and very strongly supportive letter was sent that provided the Dalai Lama with a "concise and clear statement of the attitude of the United States." For security reasons, this letter was unsigned, undated, and contained no mention of the United States. It was believed to have reached the Dalai Lama by 6 July:

> We sent you a letter two months ago about the dangers of the Chinese Communists. Some of your advisors probably think that they under-

40. FO371/92997, minute by R. H. Scott, dated 27 June 1951.
41. USFR, 793B.00/7-1251, telegram from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 2 July 1951.
42. Ibid.
43. USFR, 793B.00/7-351, telegram no. 13 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 3 July 1951.
44. USFR, 793B.00/7-951, telegram no. 28 from the U.S. consul in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 9 July 1951. This, as will be seen below, was untrue.

stand the Chinese Communists and can make a bargain with them. We do not think they understand Communism or the record of its leaders. . . . Your Holiness is the chief hope of Tibet. If the Chinese Communists seize control of Tibet, you will be the recognized leader and will symbolize the hopes of the Tibetans for the recovery of Tibet's freedom.

We do not know whether you received our letter about the Chinese Communists. We would like to know.

Since sending the previous letter we have read in the newspapers your delegation to Peiping signed an agreement with the Chinese Communists. We do not believe they signed it with your permission but [that they] were forced to do so. However, the world is beginning to think that you do not object to the agreement because you have made no statement about it. We think you should make this statement soon because the Chinese Communists are sending a delegation to Yatung through India. If you make your statement before they reach India, it should make it difficult for the Chinese delegation to come to Tibet. If you do not make such a statement, we think that Tibetan autonomy is gone forever. The only access we have to Tibet is through the country of India. It is therefore important that Tibet tell India what you now want to do and persuade India to help you or permit other countries to help you. We don't know for sure but we think it is possible India will permit help because although India now seems friendly with the Chinese Communists we know many Indians are fearful of the Communists near India. We ourselves are willing to help Tibet now and will do the following things at this time:

1) After you issue the statement disavowing the agreement which your delegation signed with the Chinese Communists in Peking, we will issue a public statement of our own supporting your stand.

2) If you decide to send a new appeal to the United Nations, we will support your case in the United Nations.

3) If you leave Tibet, we think you should seek asylum in India, Thailand or Ceylon in that order of priority because then you will be closer to Tibet and will be able to organize its resistance to the Chinese Communists. Although we haven't consulted India, we think it would let you come to India because it said you could come last year. We haven't consulted Thailand or Ceylon but we will ask them if you can come if you want us to talk to them. If you are unable to remain in any of these countries, you may come to our country with some of your followers.

4) If you leave Tibet and if you organize resistance to the Chinese

> Communists, we are prepared to send you light arms through India. We think, however, that you should first ask India for arms and, if they cannot give them to you, ask India for permission for other countries to send them through India. If you are able to organize resistance within Tibet, we will also give consideration to supplying you with loans of money to keep up the resistance, spirit and morale of the Tibetan people. This is important if Tibet's autonomy is to be maintained or regained in the event you should fell impelled to seek asylum outside of Tibet. We will discuss plans and programs of military assistance and loans of money with your representatives when you tell us who your representatives are.
>
> 5) We have already told your brother, Taktse Rimpoche, that he can go to our country and we are making arrangements for his departure.
>
> We are willing to do all these things. We have sent you many messages to this effect. We do not know if you have received them. Therefore we ask you to write us whether you have received this letter. We ask you also to send us a personal representative or to write us which Tibetan representatives in India have your confidence.[45]

This U.S. communiqué did not sway the Dalai Lama. On 11 July, Shakabpa received word from the Dalai Lama that he would meet with the Chinese delegation and return to Tibet in ten days. The Dalai Lama, moreover, instructed all Tibetan officials in Kalimpong to return to Yatung with the Chinese delegation, and a large number left with the Chinese on the eleventh.[46]

In the meantime, in Washington, the United States raised their offer. State Department officials met with Taktse Rimpoche and orally presented a new offer which was cited in a telegram from Acheson to the U.S. Embassy in Delhi. It stated that the United States was willing to support: (1) Tibetan "self-determination," (2) the Dalai Lama as the head of an autonomous Tibet, and (3) the Dalai Lama's ultimate return to Tibet to head a non-Communist state. The United States, through "friends of Tibet in the U.S.," also would now see that the movement of the Dalai Lama and an entourage of 100 to Ceylon, as well as the

45. USFR, 793B.00/7-1151, letter forwarded to Dalai Lama included in a dispatch from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. State Department, dated 11 July 1951.

46. USFR, 793B.00/7-1251, telegram no. 34 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 12 July 1951.

Dalai Lama's other needs in Ceylon, would be paid. Acheson's cable said:

> US Govt believes Tibet shld not be compelled by duress accept violation its autonomy and that Tib people shld enjoy rights self determination commensurate with autonomy Tibet has had many years. This has consistently been position US. US therefore will indicate publicly its understanding of the position of DL as head of an autonomous Tibet.
>
> US similarly will endeavor to persuade other nations take no action adverse DL's position as head autonomous Tibet.
>
> US will support Tib request for refuge in Ceylon; it believes that cost chartering planes for journey DL and entourage from India to Ceylon cld be met by US CITS [citizens] having strong and friendly interest Tibet; if requested by DL, US will use its best efforts persuade GOI assure transit DL and retinue. (It was pointed out here that in view practical considerations, approach GOC and GOI shld be made in first instance by representative DL; that assurances thus given based on assumption refuge wld be taken Ceylon; and that if refuge shld be taken India financial assurances wld have to be reexamined.)
>
> To extent required and as long as mutually satisfactory purposes served, friends of Tibet in US will provide appropriate support for DL, his family and entourage of 100 or slightly more in Ceylon, it being our hope that among considerations DL wld have in selection wld be polit influence and effect persons chosen.
>
> Resistance in Tibet must be viewed as long range problem limited by physical polit conditions in Tibet and in adjoining areas, over which US of course has no control. [section excised from file] The assurances conditioned on withdrawal DL from Tibet, his public refusal accept Tibet-CHi COMMIE agreement, his continued opposition COMMIE aggression, and his continued willingness coop generally; implicit in this understanding however is US support DL's return Tibet at earliest practical moment as head autonomous non-COMMIE country. Recommended Tibet urgently approach GOI for informal discussion India attitude toward departure DL from Tibet. This approach SHLD include firm statement that DL seeks transit rights through India. US through Emb New Delhi will use good offices support this request.
>
> It made clear to Taktser that our position basic and longstanding is not related to CHi COMMIE involvement in Korea and not to be affected by developments there.
>
> REF item 5 Calcutta's 28 Jul 9, RPTD New Delhi 29th, Taktser has

> indicated he will prepare Tib language MSG to DL, including above info, to be forwarded DIPL pouch ETD WASH JUL 15. You will be further advised channel communicationn MSG from Taktser to DL. Meanwhile you SHLD endeavor pass substantive portions this TEL to DL by best available means. .
>
> Acheson[47]

The United States attempted to have Shakabpa delay his planned departure to Yatung until the letter prepared by Taktse had arrived, but they were unsuccessful.[48]

On 13 July the U.S. Consulate in Calcutta received two telegrams from R. H. Linn in Kalimpong saying that Shakabpa had informed him that the Dalai Lama approved of coming to India but that his advisors favored his going to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama also requested more information on the discussion between the United States and the Indian government regarding India's willingness to receive him and facilitate his stay. Linn offered two reasons why the Dalai Lama had delayed deciding to come to India: (1) the Dalai Lama believed that India was unwilling to receive him, and (2) he feared that the Chinese would take reprisals if he accepted U.S. support and disavowed the agreement. Linn suggested that the United States attempt to persuade the Indian government to assure Shakabpa that they were willing to receive the Dalai Lama.[49] The State Department agreed with this suggestion and requested the U.S. Embassy in India to urge the Indian government to invite the Dalai Lama to India, explaining that because of the pro-Chinese tilt of the Indians, Tibet was unwilling to approach them directly. The London U.S. Embassy was instructed to ask the British also to urge this invitation.[50]

When the British Foreign Office consulted their high commissioner about approaching India, he responded that the Foreign Office ought

47. USFR, 793B.00/7-1251, telegram no. 107 from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. Embassy in India, dated 12 July 1951.

48. USFR, 793B.00/7-1351, telegram no. 108 from the U.S. State Department to the U.S. consul in Calcutta, dated 13 July 1951.

49. Cited in USFR, 793B.00/7-1451, telegram no. 43 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 14 July 1951.

50. USFR, 793B.00/7-1651, telegram no. 335 from the U.S. State Department to the U.S. Embassy in London, dated 16 July 1951.

to try to persuade the Americans to drop the whole idea.[51] The Foreign Office then told the Americans that the Tibetans should contact the Indians themselves, referring to India's offer of asylum made in October 1950 and asking if India would still honor this offer.[52]

Meanwhile, in Kalimpong, R. H. Linn and W. G. Gibson persuaded Shakabpa to contact Dayal informally in Gangtok about this when he went to Yatung.[53] On 17 July, U.S. officials in Delhi met Dutt of the India Ministry for External Affairs and made an unofficial suggestion that it would be useful if the Indian government instructed Dayal about asylum since the Dalai Lama was seriously considering the matter. The next day the U.S. Embassy informed Dutt that a representative of the Dalai Lama was about to contact Dayal at any moment. Dutt responded that Dayal had been instructed regarding asylum.[54]

When Shakabpa met Dayal in Gangtok, however, Dayal said he had received no instructions from Delhi regarding asylum for the Dalai Lama in India. Gibson, who had gone to Gangtok to facilitate communications, confirmed Shakabpa's report by talking directly to Dayal.[55] Upon receipt of this news, the U.S. Embassy in Delhi notified Dutt, who admitted with embarrassment that Dayal had not been instructed about asylum until the evening of the eighteenth. Dutt then explained to Embassy Counsellor L. V. Steele that "*in accordance with international law,* [*India*] *was prepared to grant asylum upon the condition that DL* [*Dalai Lama*] *did not engage in polit*[*ical*] *activities while in India.*"[56] At Steele's suggestion, Dutt said he would take steps to assure that this information was passed on to the Dalai Lama in Yatung.[57] India, however, had again demonstrated its lack of commitment to Tibet.

51. FO371/92998, letter from J. A. Murray of the British Foreign Office in London to F. S. Tomlinson of the British Embassy in Washington, dated 18 July 1951.

52. FO371/92998, telegram from the United Kingdom Foreign Office's South Asia Department to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India, dated 20 July 1951.

53. USFR, 793B.00/7-1751, telegram no. 52 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 17 July 1951.

54. USFR, 793B.00/7-1951, telegram no. 269 from the chargé d'affaires in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 19 July 1951.

55. Ibid.; and USFR, 793B.00/7-1951, telegram no. 61 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 19 July 1951.

56. Ibid. (emphasis added).

57. USFR, 793B.00/7-2151, telegram no. 302 from Ambassador L. Henderson in Delhi to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 21 July 1951.

At the same time, the United States had worked out an escape plan for the Dalai Lama that was based on the somewhat dubious assumption that the Dalai Lama was being physically prevented from seeking asylum by pro-Chinese elements surrounding him. A message was sent to Yatung on 17 July that urged the Dalai Lama to adopt one of three options:

a. Choose small group of faithful followers and leave quietly with them. This wld presumably involve leaving at night in effort to avoid deputations which have come to Yatung from principal monasteries and from govt at Lhasa to persuade Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa.

b. Order [name excised from file] bring him surreptitiously to India. [section excised from file]

c. If neither (a) nor (b) feasible, Dalai Lama to send msg to [name excised from file] requesting [name excised from file] send Harrer and Patterson secretly and in disguise to meet Dalai Lama near Yatung in accordance with prearranged plan and bring Dalai Lama back. Detailed plan for this operation also being conveyed by [name excised from file] but he is to make it clear to Dalai Lama it is to be adopted only as a last resort.[58]

On 20 July the U.S. Consulate in Calcutta passed along the letter Taktse Rimpoche had sent from Washington, D.C., via another unnamed person, who was to see that it reached Yatung and the Dalai Lama. Almost simultaneously, the U.S. Consulate received telegraphic word from Yatung (by prearranged code) that the Dalai Lama was returning to Lhasa,[59] which in fact he did on 23 July.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE IN YATUNG

The largest faction in Yatung comprised those who felt strongly that the Dalai Lama should return to Lhasa. It included all the trunyichemmo, all the monastic officials, Cawtang, the acting chigyab khembo, the Dalai Lama tutors, and some lay officials such as Pandat-

58. USFR, 793B.00/7-1751, telegram no. 52 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 17 July 1951.

59. USFR, 793B.00/7-2251, telegram no. 68 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 22 July 1951.

sang and Sholkang. The pro-exile-to-U.S. faction was led by Surkhang Shape, Drönyerchemmo Phala, Tsipön Namseling, and the Dalai Lama's family.[60] The final decision for the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa came after a three-day National Assembly held from about 7 to 10 July.

The opposing views can be seen from the final debates. Tsipön Namseling said that the Seventeen-Point Agreement accepted that Tibet was completely a part of China and that the argument was made without consultation with the government. He argued that although the Chinese Communists now promised that they would leave Tibet as it was, when there were large numbers of Chinese troops in Tibet the Chinese could change their mind. No foreign country would be able to help Tibet then. Namseling insisted that the Communists could not be trusted and that it was imperative for the assembly to reject this agreement before the Chinese delegation arrived in Tibet, since the Chinese presence would be tantamount to acknowledging the validity of the agreement.[61]

Namseling was opposed by Trunyichemmo Chömpel Thubten, who argued passionately that the Seventeen-Point Agreement did not disturb the position of the Dalai Lama and monastic life and therefore should be accepted. He said, "We have sent five excellent representatives to China and I have faith that they would not exchange the entire nation for a cup of beer. We have requested foreign help and are dependent on it. But what have we received from our appeals? Nothing, and in the future we will receive no more than we have up to now. The Dalai Lama must go back to Lhasa. We cannot let him go to a foreign land."[62] In response to Namseling's rebuttal that unless the assembly denounced the agreement before the Chinese arrived Tibet would become a Communist country, Chömpel Thubten angrily retorted, "I have lived in a foreign country and know very well that it is very difficult to live abroad if no one pays you attention and helps you.[63] What will we do in India if this happens? We have seen that the Indian government does not want to support or assist us in any way, so how can

60. Gyentsen Tempel, interview; Pandenla, interview; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
61. Gyentsen Tempel, interview. He participated in that assembly debate.
62. Ibid.
63. He had served in the Tibetan Bureau Office in China.

you say the Dalai Lama should leave Tibet and live under such circumstances in an alien non-Buddhist country? What do you know about this?"

Then a lay official supported Chömpel Thubten: "First Shakabpa had told us that India would welcome us with great dignity and honor, but now when we have come to the very doorstep of India we see no signs of welcome. Seeking help and trying to rely on foreign countries has had no result. It is better that we rely on the Chinese. I am going back whatever you decide."[64] He was followed by others who argued that if the Dalai Lama renounced the agreement and fled into exile he might never again return to Tibet and certainly would not be able to use his position to help his people. If he remained behind, however, many ways were likely to develop in which the Dalai Lama could use his influence to moderate the Chinese occupation of Tibet.[65]

The thought of trying to live abroad with no estates or subsidies frightened many of the aristocratic officials. Although they distrusted and feared the Chinese Communists, they were inclined to remain in Tibet on the chance that under the Seventeen-Point Agreement Tibet could maintain its socioeconomic system, and they could keep their style of life.[66] One main advocate for accepting the Chinese offer was Pandatsang, the important official and trader. He is said to have made a major effort to mold public opinion in Yatung against the Dalai Lama going abroad.[67]

After long and heated debate the assembly recommended to the Kashag that because the Seventeen-Point Agreement left Tibet in the hands of the Dalai Lama, the Dalai Lama should return to Lhasa.

The anti-Chinese faction, led by Surkhang, made a last-ditch attempt to thwart the assembly's recommendation by insisting that a divine lottery be held before a final decision be made. Amid sacred prayers and

64. Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
65. Sambo (Rimshi), interview; Gyentsen Tempel, interview.
66. USFR, enclosure to dispatch 119 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. State Department, dated 17 September 1951.
67. Shakabpa, interview. Pandatsang's motives for this are not known. Lhalungpa (interview) vaguely recalls that there was talk to this effect about Pandatsang at this time, but other former officials have indicated they had never heard this.

incense, the lottery bowl was shaken before the goddess Lhamo. When the dough ball that popped out was opened, it said that the Dalai Lama should return to Lhasa. Still convinced that flight was the only rational course of action, Surkhang (accompanied by Tricang Rimpoche) examined the second dough ball to make sure that the lottery had not been rigged by putting identical answers in both dough balls. The second dough ball, however, was as it should have been.[68]

The final decision to return to Lhasa was made on 10 or 11 July. On 14 July, the Chinese delegation, headed by Chang Ching-wu, arrived in Yatung and was given a friendly greeting by the Tibetan officials present. During the following two days Chang Ching-wu met with important Tibetan officials and the Dalai Lama, and presented the latter with a letter from Mao Tse-tung. The Dalai Lama told Chang that he would reply regarding acceptance of the Seventeen-Point Agreement after he returned to Lhasa and had consulted with the abbots of the monasteries and other officials. He also told Chang that it would be better if they did not return to Lhasa together, and Chang agreed. On 20 July the Dalai Lama sent a telegram to Mao through the Minority Nationalities Commission in Peking that expressed his welcome to Chang Ching-wu and said that the Tibetan National Assembly would be convened to discuss the Seventeen-Point Agreement after they returned to Lhasa and after Ngabö arrived with the original copy of the agreement.[69]

On 21 July the Dalai Lama left Yatung for Lhasa, although his mother and her family remained in Kalimpong. Two days later, after receiving the Indian political officer in Sikkim, Chang also left for Lhasa. Anti-Indian feeling was running very high at this time, and the Dalai Lama himself commented that Tibetan officials were insulted that Dayal, although residing only two days away in Gangtok (Sikkim),

68. Pandenla, interview.

69. Lu'o 1982:140; USFR, 793B.00/8-1551, telegram no. 664 from the U.S. Embassy in Hong Kong to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 15 August 1951, containing reports of Chinese Communist announcements from New China News Agency. Lha'u rta ra ([Lhautara] 1986B: 45) also indicates that when he, Kheme, and Sambo reported in detail the events surrounding their signing of the Seventeen-Point Agreement to the Kashag in Yatung, they were told that no final decision would be made until they returned to Lhasa. He also said that he and Kheme were not permitted a private audience with the Dalai Lama.

made no attempt to pay even a courtesy call, despite the fact that he had been warmly welcomed in Lhasa only a little more than a year before.[70] An official from the U.S. Consulate in Calcutta recalls a conversation he had with the Tibetan trade agent in Yatung, Pandatsang (Yambe) on about 17 September, which reflects this attitude clearly:

> Pandatshang emphasized that he and many other Tibetans felt that they had been completely deserted by the rest of the world in their efforts to reach a settlement with the Chinese Communist Government. He argued that the Tibetan Government was deeply discouraged by the rebuffs received by its emissaries to New Delhi about a year and a half ago, and by the failure of any other country to come out strongly for the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy. Most Tibetans felt, he said, that India was seriously to blame [for] Tibet's apparent isolation. He reviewed recent events which had made the Tibetans particularly bitter and had strengthened the resolve of many never again to seek the assistance of India in any way. He pointed out that Mr. Harishwar Dayal, Indian Political Agent of Sikkim and representative designated by the Indian Government for official contact with the Tibetans, had failed to convey to the Tibetans any willingness on the part of the Government of India to receive the Dalai Lama should he wish to leave Tibet.[71]

The only outside country that had offered Tibet any support was the United States, but it did not offer a real hope of preventing the Chinese takeover or of Tibet regaining control in the near future. As the Tibetans saw it, the United States had sent thousands of troops to Korea, yet it was unwilling to make a similar commitment to Tibetan "freedom" and instead repeatedly insisted that all military aid (meaning guns, not troops) had to come through India. The Tibetans, as we have seen, considered this a meaningless gesture since the Indian answer was a foregone conclusion.

Thus, the U.S. offers of concern and support must have appeared to the majority of leading officials as weak. America would serve as a haven where the Dalai Lama could decry Chinese aggression, but from which he could do little to regain his throne. The United States offered

70. Dalai Lama, interview.
71. USFR, 611.93B231/9-1751, enclosure to dispatch 119 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. State Department, dated 17 September 1951.

to help the Dalai Lama keep alive the flame of Tibetan autonomy and freedom, but little else. The pro-compromise faction, however, believed that if the Dalai Lama left, Tibet would be open to total domination by the Chinese and the new Panchen Lama, who appeared to be their puppet. The abbots and important monk officials and lamas could not imagine that the Communists would want to destroy Buddhism if unprovoked, and therefore saw the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa as Tibet's best hope of preserving the essence of their lamaist state. The U.S. offers to help Tibet were insufficient to allow the Dalai Lama to ignore the very strong views of virtually the entire religious elite (the monasteries and monk officials) and of a sizable segment of the lay officials.

Surprisingly, the Dalai Lama's decision to abide by the Seventeen-Point Agreement and return to Lhasa did not result in the United States bowing out of the picture. On the contrary, the United States became more concerned with Tibet, redoubling its efforts to persuade the Dalai Lama to flee into exile, now from Lhasa. They rationalized that their failure to persuade the Dalai Lama to leave Yatung had been primarily the effect of "unreliable intermediaries."[72] Putting all this together, the State Department concluded that they had made a mistake in trying to send messages only to the Dalai Lama, ignoring the other influential officials such as the shapes, who, they suspected, were unaware of the United States' offers.[73] The United States, therefore, took a number of more dramatic steps in early August 1951.

THE NEW UNITED STATES INITIATIVE

Washington agreed with the Embassy's view that there was still a chance to persuade the Dalai Lama to reverse his decision and authorized further attempts to contact him in Lhasa. On 4 August, Dean Acheson instructed that the following verbal message should be given to the Tibetans:

72. USFR, 793B.00/8-151, telegram no. 295 from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. Embassy in India, dated 4 August 1951, in U.S. Foreign Relations, 1951 vol. 7, p. 1769.

73. USFR, 793B.00/8-1351, telegram no. 114 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 13 August 1951.

> US Govt understands and sympathizes with reasons and circumstances which might lead to ur remaining Tibet at this time. However, US Govt desires repeat its belief that you can best serve ur people and country by evading Communist control at earliest opportunity and by denouncing agreement with Communist China after you will have reached safe asylum. Takster is well and safe in US and hopes that you will consider favorably US Govt pledge of assistance previously made you and limited entourage in asylum.[74]

On 6 August the U.S. embassy asked permission to translate this into Tibetan for transmission to Yatung by courier, with all references to the United States removed. The embassy also suggested that the phrase "in India or Ceylon" be added to the end of the message. On 9 August, Washington agreed.[75]

This U.S. unwillingness to give the Tibetan government anything official in writing weakened the impact of the U.S. offers. For example, when an unsigned message was delivered to Ragashar Shape (who was on his way back to Lhasa) in late July, Ragashar's reaction was "incredulity as he could not believe if US willing assist, US unwilling make formal pledge. He told [name excised from file] unsigned message would not convince Kashag if, as he believes, opportunity should arise in Lhasa to make effective use US offer assistance in bringing about DL's departure." Ragashar also said that it did not matter exactly who signed the letter, so long as it was signed and was a formal statement on U.S. government letterhead.[76]

In the light of Ragashar's comments, Evan Wilson now strongly urged the State Department to approve a formal statement, reminding them that final negotiations on the Seventeen-Point Agreement would begin shortly after the Dalai Lama's arrival in Lhasa that week. According to Wilson, the Dalai Lama still desired to go to India, and Tibet

74. USFR, 793B.00/8-151, telegram no. 295 from the U.S. secretary of state to the Embassy in Washington, D.C., dated 4 August 1951.

75. USFR, 793B.00/8-1351, telegram no. 114 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 13 August 1951.

76. Ibid. Another Tibetan who carried a message to the Dalai Lama in Yatung in July later told E. M. Wilson in Calcutta in mid-August that the Dalai Lama had commented that the message was unsigned (USFR, 793B.00/8-1851, enclosure I to dispatch 68 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 18 August 1951).

might still disavow the agreement. Therefore, he said, "in such circumstances, formal statement our attitude might be deciding factor."[77]

However, at this time Henderson was not in India and Horace Holmes, the chief agriculturalist in the U.S. Embassy, was acting as the senior officer. He was opposed to sending a signed letter, and told Washington:

> Ref Contel 114, rptd New Delhi 110, August 13 from Calcutta, Emb appreciated opportunity which exists in possible transmittal letter on US letterhead signed by American official to Tib Defense Min .. for purpose persuading Tib officials to disavow Sino-Tib agreement and to advise DL to leave Tibet.
>
> Emb believes, however, risks involved in transmittal proposed letter are far greater than advantages which may result for US and Tibet. If such a document fell into Commie Chi hands, it might be used as evidence US endeavor imperialistically to interfere in internal affairs of Tibet and to disrupt ostensibly friendly relations between China and Tibet. It might even be possible, if Tibs were hard pressed in further negots with Commie Chi, that Tibs might use such document to reinforce their position.
>
> Emb questions, in any event, whether additional communication from US, even on US letterhead and signed by Amer official, would increase Tibet knowledge and belief in US position. As Dept and ConGen aware, all previous msgs re US position were transmitted to DL through two and in some cases three channels of communications. These channels included Shakabpa, Taktse and Harrer. Important Tib officials surrounding DL were probably informed substance these msgs in transmission to DL by DL for receipt. Harrer has informed Emb DL sent him two ltrs in which DL acknowledged receipt all US communications and indicated he would have preferred to leave Tibet but decided return Lhasa in accordance with "wishes and opinion of the majority of Tibet."
>
> On balance, therefore, Emb believes DL and Tib officials are well informed re US position and that the proposed letter to Tib Defense Min would not sufficiently add to such knowledge to justify risks involved. Furthermore, Dept msg quoted in Deptel 295, Aug 4 as amended in Embtel 507, Aug 6, which [name deleted] will carry to Lhasa when he

77. USFR, 793B.00/8-1351, telegram no. 114 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 13 August 1951.

leaves Calcutta . . , should provide further evidence to DL and Tib officials of continuing US interest.

At later stage, when some definite indication of developments at Lhasa is recd, Emb envisages that a further message of encouragement might be sent. In such message Emb believes it might be helpful to suggest that DL send personal rep in whom he and Tib officials had confidence to India for informal discussion with Amer officials. Such rep would be able return Tib and make report which would confirm substance US position and wld be more likely serve as basis for such further actions as DL prepared to take. In addition, Taktse might write DL at that time observing that Taktse's own ltrs may not be reaching him and recommending rep be sent India for informal discussion with Amer officials re possible future courses of action.

Suggestions advanced in foregoing para are based on belief Tibs in Lhasa will continue to "stall" in their negots with Commie Chi and have merit of avoiding dispatch official US documents to Tibet where they may reach unfriendly hands.

Holmes[78]

The State Department concurred. Not only were they worried that a signed letter might fall into Chinese hands, but they admitted that "to be of use to Kashag, US Govt wld have appear commit itself to courses action such as financial and arms aid which it is not in position explicitly to do."[79] Nevertheless, the United States continued to attempt to persuade the Dalai Lama to flee Tibet. On 15 August, Wilson prepared another unsigned letter on untraceable paper with the (oral) message approved by Acheson on 4 August (cited above). It was sent to the Dalai Lama through an unnamed English-speaking Tibetan who was going to Lhasa and who promised to hand it directly to the Dalai Lama.[80]

78. USFR, 793B.00/8-1451, telegram no. 613 from the U.S. chargé d'affaires in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 14 August 1951 (emphasis added).

79. USFR, 793B.00/8-1351, telegram no. 81 from the acting secretary of state to the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta, dated 15 August 1951. This statement supports somewhat the British view that the State Department was trying to use the Dalai Lama primarily to gain propaganda value against the Chinese Communists but was not committed to providing the necessary support for him to regain the Tibet he would be forsaking.

80. USFR, 793B.00/8-1651, telegram no. 121 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 16 August 1951, in U.S. Foreign Relations,

A little less than a month later, on 10 September, the issue of a signed U.S. letter again surfaced when Heinrich Harrer told the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta that a high Tibetan official was anxious, despite personal peril, to return to Lhasa to persuade the Tibetan government that the Dalai Lama should leave Tibet. This official believed that in presenting arguments to the Kashag and important lay officials he must be able to swear he had seen a signed letter from the U.S. government promising aid. Harrer suggested that the Americans prepare such a letter and show this to the Tibetan official but not give him a copy.[81] Harrer argued that the Dalai Lama was still extremely eager to leave Tibet but lacked sufficient support among his lay officials to overcome the continuing opposition from the monks (and monk officials). Although the Chinese armies were closing in on Lhasa, Harrer estimated that they would not arrive for two months. Therefore, the unnamed Tibetan official, who was "in a position of sufficient seniority to permit him to approach and attempt to convince all important figures in the government," could make a significant impact if he were able to take an oath that the United States had made such an offer.[82] Ambassador Henderson supported the plan and requested permission from the State Department to implement it.[83]

The U.S. secretary of state approved this plan on 14 September, provided that the letter never left the possession of U.S. officials and that the Tibetans only saw it in the presence of U.S. officials. Acheson suggested that a letter similar to the earlier letters to the Dalai Lama would be suitable, with one important exception—the section dealing with aid to resistance groups must be limited to a general statement that aid would be furnished as was feasible under existing political and

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1951 vol. 7, p. 1791; and USFR, 793B.00/8-1851, enclosure no. 1 in dispatch no. 68 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 18 August 1951.

81. USFR, 793B.00/9-1051, telegram from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 10 September 1951.

82. USFR, 793B.00/9-1251, report of conversation with Harrer in an enclosure to dispatch no. 117 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 12 September 1951.

83. USFR, 793B.00/9-1251, telegram from the U.S. ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 12 September 1951.

physical conditions. The final text and implementation were left to the discretion of the ambassador.[84]

The secret meeting took place at the Calcutta Consulate on the evening of 30 September. Present were Linn, the Tibetan official, and Harrer. The Tibetan (whose name has been excised from the American files) was shown a letter, addressed to the Dalai Lama, that had been signed by Ambassador Henderson. The Tibetan studied the letter thoroughly and made notes in Tibetan. After he was finished the letter was replaced in the Consulate's safe.[85] The letter said:

AMERICAN EMBASSY
New Delhi, September 17th, 1951

Your Holiness:

The Government of the United States has observed with deep sympathy your efforts over a long period to prevent Chinese Communist aggression from destroying the autonomy of Tibet. My Government also fully understands that Your Holiness has hoped that by remaining in Tibet you might be able to be of some service in protecting the Tibetan people from subjugation. It is convinced, however, that if you remain in Tibet you will either be [excised] or compelled to become a servant of the Communists. It believes that if you remain in Tibet you will not be able to be of aid to your people.

It is the opinion of the United States Government that if you could arrange to leave Tibet and to seek asylum in some country such as Ceylon, you might be able to continue your struggle to preserve the autonomy of Tibet and the liberty of the Tibetan people. Since my Government believes that Tibet should not be compelled under duress to accept the violation of its autonomy, it wishes to do all that is possible and proper to prevent this violation from taking place. If, therefore, Your Holiness would like to seek asylum in Ceylon, or in some other country, my Government would be prepared, in case you should desire, to endeavor to assist you in making arrangements for such an asylum and for obtaining permission to pass through various countries in transit.

84. USFR, 793B.00/9-1251, telegram no. 128 from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta, dated 14 September 1951.

85. USFR, 793B.00/10-151, telegram no. 185 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 1 October 1951. H. Harrer has not responded to queries regarding his involvement with the United States at this time.

Furthermore, my Government would be prepared to arrange for the payment of the travel expenses of Your Holiness and for those of your family and retinue. It would also be prepared, so long as mutually satisfactory purposes are being served, and to the extent required, to enter into arrangements which would provide for appropriate financial support for Your Holiness, your family, and a retinue of approximately one hundred persons.

My Government ventures to express the hope that in case you decide to leave Tibet, Your Holiness give consideration to the factors of political effectiveness and influence in selecting persons to accompany you. My Government is also prepared to make arrangements that you and some of your retinue may find asylum in the United States in case it should seem impracticable to take refuge elsewhere.

It is the belief of my Government that resistance to Communist encroachment in Tibet must be regarded as a long range problem, the solution of which is necessarily limited by political and physical conditions in Tibet and in adjoining areas. The United States has, of course, no control over such conditions, but it is prepared to support resistance now and in the future against Communist aggression in Tibet, and to provide such material aid as may be feasible.

Your Holiness will understand, of course, that the readiness of the United States to render you the assistance and support outlined above is conditional upon your departure from Tibet, upon your public disavowal of agreements concluded under duress between the representatives of Tibet and those of the Chinese Communists, and upon your continued willingness to cooperate in opposing Communist aggression.

An essential part of our cooperation would be a public announcement by the United States that it supports the position of Your Holiness as the head of an autonomous Tibet. The United States would also support your return to Tibet at the earliest practicable moment as the head of an autonomous[,] and non-Communist, country. The position of the United States in this regard is fundamental and will not be affected by developments in Korea or by Chinese Communist intervention in that area.

It is suggested that Your Holiness may care to approach the Government of India informally in order to obtain a clarification of the attitude of that Government with regard to your departure from Tibet and related problems. It is the understanding of my Government that the Indian Government would be prepared to permit Your Holiness either to

pass through or to reside in India. In case you should so desire, the Government of the United States would be prepared to discuss the matter with the Government of India.

(signed) Loy W. Henderson
Loy W. Henderson
American Ambassador[86]

The Tibetan told Linn that he would see Ngabö—who by then had arrived from China—Ragashar, and three or four other ranking officials including the two prime ministers and the Dalai Lama's brother, Lobsang Samden.[87] However, the next day he apparently had second thoughts as to whether key officials in Lhasa would be convinced by his merely saying he had seen the letter. He worried that people in Lhasa would demand proof that the American consul-general would not alter the letter or even go so far as to rescind it after he had left Calcutta. He suggested that the letter be "locked in a strong box and placed in the safe deposit vault of a local bank to which only a duly designated representative of the Dalai Lama would have access." Linn was insulted by this and testily answered that "if [name deleted] was so suspicious of the motives of the American Government that he believed there was a danger of our going to the length of changing the wording of the Ambassador's letter after he had seen it, he had a wholly mistaken impression of the way in which the American Government did business."[88]

The Tibetan let that matter drop but did raise two other issues. First, he asked whether the United States would also provide financial support for the families of the Dalai Lama's retinue of about 100 persons. He said that if they were left behind they would provide the Communists with a very effective means of applying pressure. He said that the total number of people, including families, would be between 150 and 300 persons, and he emphasized that this was a very important issue for the Tibetans. Second, the Tibetan asked what the U.S. attitude would be if the Dalai Lama stayed in Lhasa but sent a small group of trusted

86. USFR, 793B.00/9-1851, enclosure no. 1 in letter to the Dalai Lama, in dispatch no. 662 from the U.S. Embassy in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 18 September 1951.

87. USFR, 793B.00/10-551, dispatch no. 157 from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 5 October 1951.

88. Ibid.

officials to organize resistance from outside Tibet. Wilson said he did not know the answers and would ask Washington, but indicated that all previous discussions had been predicated on the Dalai Lama leaving Tibet.[89] The unnamed Tibetan left for Kalimpong on 3 October, but did not leave there for Lhasa until at least 4 November.[90]

It is not known whether these messages reached the Dalai Lama; in any case, events in Lhasa made a reversal of Tibetan policy impossible.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES THE AGREEMENT IN LHASA

As was indicated earlier, the Dalai Lama told Chang Ching-Wu in Yatung that he would publicly acknowledge the Seventeen-Point Agreement after he returned to Tibet. Chang arrived in Lhasa on 8 August and was greeted warmly, by order of the Yatung Kashag.[91] The Dalai Lama arrived on 17 August. For the next month, however, the Kashag and the two acting lönchens, Lukhang and Lobsang Tashi, stalled formal acceptance of the terms of the Seventeen-Point Agreement, despite the prodding of the Chinese and Ngabö. In late September, the five Tibetans who signed the agreement discussed the Kashag's reluctance and agreed that Ngabö should tell the other shapes that if they had a problem in accepting the agreement, they should call a National Assembly so that Ngabö could explain its terms.[92] The Kashag

89. Ibid. Acheson responded on 6 October by saying that the support of the Dalai Lama's entourage was primarily the responsibility of Buddhists and that the American pledge for financial aid would be limited to 150 persons. On the second point, the State Department did not agree to support unless the Dalai Lama fled and repudiated the agreement. (USFR, 793B.00/10-651, telegram from the U.S. secretary of state to the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta, dated 6 October, 1951.) This response does not seem to have been passed along to the Tibetan in question.

90. USFR, 793B.001/11-451, telegram from the U.S. consul-general in Calcutta to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 4 November 1951.

91. Shan kha ba (Shankawa) ms.: 332ff.; Lu'o 1982: 143; Thubten Sanggye, interview. Initially it was decided that all the lay officials and the two acting shapes would greet Chang in a ceremony analogous to that given to shapes who were leaving or returning to Lhasa. However, the monk officials protested that they should also be allowed to greet the Chinese, and the Three monastic Seats, though never invited, decided that they wanted also to be represented and simply showed up at the ceremony.

92. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 113; Lu'o (1985: 261) says that Ngabö requested the Assembly meeting; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.

agreed, and on 28 September 1951 the National Assembly was convened.

The five Tibetan signatories to the Seventeen-Point Agreement, led by Ngabö, were present but were seated separately from the main body of delegates. Ngabö gave a detailed and rather impassioned speech to the assembly that took over an hour. He ended his comments:

> If you feel that this Seventeen-Point Agreement will help the joint secular and religious form of government and the activities of the Dalai Lama, then accept it and put it into practice. But if you think it is wrong, then you can punish me, saying that we have ignored the inner instructions. For the five of us [the delegates] whatever you want to take, our body, life, property, whatever you have to do, go ahead and do it and we will have no regrets.[93]

He then said that it would be easier for those in the assembly to discuss the matter if he and the other delegates were not there, and the five delegates left the assembly hall.

After a lengthy discussion in which the majority argued that the Seventeen-Point Agreement promised that Tibet could maintain its religious government and monastic system together with the estate system on which it was based, the assembly recommended to the Dalai Lama that the agreement be approved.[94]

On 24 October, the Dalai Lama sent an official confirmation to Mao Tse-tung. Written in Chinese Communist jargon, this telegram vividly reflects Tibet's new status:

> Chairman Mao Tse-tung. At the end of April 1951 there arrived in Peking a special delegate, Kalon Ngabo and four other plenipotentiary representatives sent by the local Tibet government. They held peaceful negotiations with the plenipotentiary delegates appointed by the Central People's Government. The representatives of both sides, on May 23, 1951, signed on a friendly basis an agreement relating to the measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet. The local government of Tibet, the monks and the entire Tibetan people express their unanimous support for this agreement. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and of the Central People's Government they are actively helping units of the

93. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982: 114; Sambo (Rimshi), interview.
94. Ibid.

> People's Liberation Army which entered Tibet for the strengthening of the national defences, the driving out of imperialist forces from Tibet and the guaranteeing of the sovereignty of the entire territory of the motherland.[95]

The same source cited Mao's 28 October reply:

> Received your telegram of October 24, 1951. I thank you for the efforts you are making to translate into reality the agreement regarding the peaceful liberation of Tibet, and I send you my most sincere greetings.

Tibet had become a part of the People's Republic of China.

In the next few months, several thousand troops of the People's Liberation Army arrived in Lhasa; although the old system continued to exist in some form for another eight years, October 1951 marks the end of the de facto independent Lamaist State. Tibet had struggled for almost four decades to attain an internationally recognized status as fully autonomous or independent, but in the end it felt compelled to accept Chinese sovereignty, with the hope of preserving the essence of its social, political, and religious system.

95. Tass, 27 October, reported that the Hsinhua News Agency published the above letter. This was contained in the British Foreign Office files, FO371/92998, as a clipping of news accounts.

CONCLUSION: THE DEMISE OF THE LAMAIST STATE

Though the nature of Sino-Tibetan political relations before 1913 may be open to dispute, Tibet unquestionably controlled its own internal and external affairs during the period from 1913 to 1951 and repeatedly attempted to secure recognition and validation of its de facto autonomy/independence. It is equally unquestionable that Chinese leaders in the twentieth century, Nationalist and Communist alike, believed that historically Tibet was a part of China and sought to reunify it with the "mother" country. This disjunction of beliefs between the two countries created a climate of tension and dispute. Both tried to reach a common ground wherein their aspirations could be satisfied, but in the end Tibet was forced, for the first time in Tibetan history, to accept Chinese *sovereignty*.

The actors and events of the 1913–1951 period have been examined in detail in the preceding chapters. It remains to highlight the main underlying causes of the demise of the de facto independent Lamaist State.

The Chinese invasion of Eastern Tibet was a major factor in the final capitulation of the Tibetan government. First, then, we must explain the military weakness that permitted the Chinese an easy victory even though Tibet had had thirty-eight years in which to prepare for confrontation. Tibet's religious segment was ultimately responsible for its military backwardness; that conservative element repeatedly thwarted

those who believed that modernization of both the government and the army was necessary for Tibet to preserve its status. Tibet saw itself as a uniquely religious country in which the pursuit of Buddhism was the dominant goal. A letter from the Tibetan government to Chiang Kai-shek in 1946 (cited in full in Chapter 15) expressed this view eloquently: "There are many great nations on this earth who have achieved unprecedented wealth and might, but there is only one nation which is dedicated to the well-being of humanity in the world and that is the religious land of Tibet which cherishes a joint spiritual and temporal system." This religious ideology took two major concrete forms: the ruler of the state was an incarnate lama; and the religiosity of the state was measured by the size of its monastic community, which expected the religious government to foster monasticism and saw its own perpetuation and elaboration as the quintessential accomplishment of the state.

The monks' commitment to a large-scale, rather than an elite, monasticism implicitly meant a decision to recruit and sustain many monks who, on the average, were of low quality. These monks—subsidized by government grants, manorial estates, endowments from private donors, and monastic banking activities—absorbed a large portion of Tibet's resources.

The Three monastic Seats, and the thousands of scattered smaller Gelugpa monasteries for which they acted as spokesmen, believed that they represented the fundamental interests of Buddhism and were obligated to preserve the religious values of the state. Thus, the monasteries worked in the government to prevent modernization, which they believed to be detrimental to both the economic base of monasticism and the "value" monopoly of Tibetan Buddhism.

A number of potential turning points between tradition and change occurred during this period, but at each, the monasteries and their allies in the government supported the most conservative positions. The first such turning point involved the 1920–1925 dispute over the expansion of the army. After the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in 1913, he instituted a number of reforms and innovations aimed at modernizing Tibet, among them the development of the army. Headed by the Dalai Lama's close favorite, the progressive Tsarong Shape, the army experimented with various styles of military training and then settled on the

British system. Tsarong's young aristocratic army commanders generally shared his belief that the future of Tibet and its unique way of life depended on its ability to defend itself from China and Nepal, as well as from its own monasteries. They believed that efficiency, not religion and superstition, should dictate policy and were in favor of adopting many of the techniques and methods of the West, particularly those of Britain. Many of these young commanders obtained military training in British India during the period from 1913 to 1919 and exhibited an esprit de corps unique in Tibet. By 1918–1919, Tibet had put together a small but credible armed force that thoroughly drubbed the Chinese troops they encountered in the warfare in Kham. As E. Teichman, a British official in Kham, commented, the fighting there showed clearly that with effective leadership and modern weapons Tibet was able to more than hold its own against China.

Tsarong realized, however, that notwithstanding the victories in Kham, Tibet needed to expand and improve its army as well as to modernize the administrative infrastructure of the government. This goal brought the military into direct confrontation with the monastic segment, monastic supporters among the great landed aristocrats, and the monk-official branch of the bureaucracy. Economic losses and a deterioration of values were their main fears.

Since the central government's regular income was inadequate to sustain an army even the size of that of 1919, increases in the number of troops required new revenue. And since the overwhelming bulk of Tibet's resources were earmarked for the monasteries, religious ceremonies, and the aristocracy, additional revenue would have to come from higher taxes paid by religious and lay estate holders.

The Tsarong-led army posed another, equally serious threat to the monastic segment and its conservative supporters. Tsarong and the majority of the military commanders adopted a conspicuously Western style of life; they often wore Western clothes and openly expressed their admiration of Western material goods and values. This Western orientation frightened the monks, who considered the alien British culture to be a direct threat to Buddhism's continued dominance in Tibet. From the monastic point of view, there was no telling what the military might demand or implement if they increased their size and power, given their leaders' lack of respect for "traditional" Tibetan customs.

And if the aristocratic and trading elite gradually became Anglicized through the introduction of English education and customs, religion could ultimately lose its patronage and Tibet its distinctive character. The young and arrogant Western-oriented military officers' corps was therefore perceived by the monks and other religious conservatives as a threat to the very foundations of the Lamaist State.

For both these reasons, the religious conservatives set about persuading the 13th Dalai Lama that the military he had created and placed under the command of his closest favorite posed a danger to Tibet. Led by the Dalai Lama's old and trusted Drönyerchemmo, Ara gaapo, the monastic-religious faction (as was discussed in Chapter 3) used the National Assembly incident of 1921 and the mutilation punishments ordered by Tsarong in 1924 to convince the Dalai Lama that the military seriously threatened Tibet's religious state and his own position as ruler. Consequently, in 1924–1925, the Dalai Lama dismissed Tsarong and all the other commanders and rescinded a host of other development and modernization projects such as the English school that had been set up in Gyantse in 1924.

The Tibetan military never recovered from this assault. In the first major confrontation between tradition and change, Tibet had chosen to face the future firmly rooted in the institutions and ideology of the past. It is not surprising, then, that when the People's Republic of China confronted Tibet in 1950–1951, Tibet was unable to defend its territory for more than a matter of days.

A second critical turning point occurred immediately after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in December 1933, when the National Assembly decided on the appointment of the regent. Many wanted a politically experienced regent with some understanding of world affairs. It was suggested that a lay official and a monk official be appointed to help Lönchen Langdün, or, alternatively, that Kumbela, the late Dalai Lama's favorite, act as Langdün's associate. The monastic segment, however, insisting again upon Tibet's unique religious identity, said that the country needed an incarnate lama as regent in order to have someone to venerate. Therefore the National Assembly appointed the very young and inexperienced Reting Rimpoche to rule jointly with Lönchen Langdün. As we have seen, by the mid-1940s Reting had plunged Tibet into chaos and civil war.

A third major turning point occurred four months after Reting's appointment as regent, when a lay official, Lungshar, attempted to reform the structure of the government through his Kyicho Küntün party. Lungshar, one of Tibet's most progressive lay officials, had lived in England in 1913 and realized that all political systems must adapt to a changing world. To friends and family he often expressed his belief that Tibet should learn from the experiences of Europe where some members of royalty, as in France, were ultimately overthrown and killed while others, as in England, relinquished their absolute power and were able to maintain an important and cherished ceremonial role. Lungshar's party (Chapter 6) would have limited the terms of the Kashag and made it partially responsible to the National Assembly. Had he succeeded, he then intended to institute major reforms to strengthen Tibet administratively and militarily. His brilliant reform plan almost succeeded, but when it failed, the magnitude of his punishment sent a clear message to any other officials who wished to reform Tibet's system: both of Lungshar's eyes were removed, his estates were confiscated, and his progeny was prohibited from serving the government.

The six years following the destruction of Lungshar (1934–1941) were dominated by the personality and morality of Reting Rimpoche and his main advisor, Nyungne Lama. The strict adherence to rules and regulations that had characterized the 13th Dalai Lama's reign was abandoned during this period, and Tibet stagnated. While Reting indulged himself, his labrang, often through dubious methods, became one of the three largest wool traders in Tibet. Any official who defied him or spoke out against him was demoted, dismissed, or utterly destroyed.

One such official was Khyungram, the lay official who in the National Assembly criticized the idea of giving Reting additional estates. His opinion reflected the feelings of many conscientious lay and monk officials who felt that if Reting needed a reward for discovering the new Dalai Lama, they would prefer to contribute from their private funds rather than deplete the government's estates. When Khyungram's plan to submit a petition to the assembly was discovered, Reting had him arrested on an unrelated charge. Khyungram was dismissed from government service, his children were barred from ever serving as officials, and all his estates were confiscated; even his wives were sent back to

their original families. He was publicly whipped and then exiled for life in remote Western Tibet, where he soon died. Coming on the heels of the Lungshar affair, this harsh punishment underlined the vulnerability of the aristocracy. Let alone actively trying to change the governmental structure, as Lungshar had done, even criticizing the incarnate lamas who ruled the country proved extremely dangerous: lay officials stood to lose not only their positions but their family estates and hereditary status.

It is important to contrast the vulnerability of the lay aristocracy with the invulnerability of the monasteries. When monasteries rebelled against the government (and lost) they immediately argued that at fault was, not the monastic institution, but only its temporary inhabitants. They could contend that monasteries and monastic estates were held in trust from the monks of the past for the monks of the future. Thus, monasteries were not usually closed or their estates confiscated. For example, in 1921, after the monks of Loseling college defiantly defecated and urinated in the Dalai Lama's garden, the college did not lose any estates (Chapter 3). In 1944, when the monks of Sera monastery murdered a district official, the monastery lost nothing. Even in Reting's rebellion, Reting Labrang lost only the wealth and possessions acquired during the *current* incarnation's reign, and Sera Che lost nothing (Chapters 13 and 14).

Reting's most significant blow to the Lamaist State was his sudden resignation from the regency in late 1940. Unable to administer the monastic vows to the young Dalai Lama because he himself had broken the required vow of celibacy, Reting had no choice but to resign. By hand-picking his successor, Taktra, he attempted to insure that he could later return to the regency. Reting's plan was that Taktra, an old and strict lama who he believed would be grateful for the chance to be regent, would look after the interests of Reting Labrang and then resign when Reting was ready to return. But Reting was completely wrong in his assessment of Taktra.

Taktra apparently had been displeased by Reting's behavior as regent. From the beginning of his own reign he set out to restore a higher level of discipline and morality. He issued a public statement that *his* labrang would not engage in trade and gradually placed anti-Reting officials in key positions. Quite the contrary to showing favoritism to

Reting or his friends, he began to attack those officials who supported Reting. In 1944–1945, when Reting came to Lhasa to try to regain the regency, Taktra refused to resign and Reting, disgruntled, was forced to return to his monastery.

From this point on, Reting and his advisors plotted to overthrow Taktra by illegal means. They devised a plan to assassinate him and others such as Lhalu. They also appealed to China for assistance, promising in return to maintain close and friendly relations. This appeal to Chiang Kai-shek for military and political aid resulted in Reting's arrest in 1947. He later died in prison, apparently having been poisoned.

In support of Reting, Sera Che college began open warfare with the government. They were easily defeated, but by the summer of 1947, when Tibet might have been preparing for the post–World War II efforts of China to bring the country under Chinese rule, it was hopelessly divided into pro-Reting and pro-Taktra factions. Indeed, many of Reting's followers saw the Chinese government as the only means of destroying the hated Taktra. Thus, the legacy of Reting's inability to remain a celibate monk destroyed the unity of the Tibetan government at a most critical point in its history.

Irrespective of the Reting opposition, the Taktra administration tried to improve Tibet's international status and strengthen its internal capabilities. The creation of an English school in Lhasa in late 1944 was one of the more visible of these attempts. The Tibetan government, realizing that securing Western equipment such as wireless broadcasting units was pointless without skilled personnel to run the equipment, embarked on a program of educating young aristocrats and monk-officials' relatives to form an English-speaking infrastructure. This action brought vehement opposition from the monastic segment, which forced the school to close by threatening to send their fierce *dobdo* monks to kidnap and sexually abuse the students. Once again, the monasteries and their conservative allies thwarted even a small step toward modernization. Their rationale was the same as it had been in 1921–1925: the school would inculcate alien, atheistic ideas and would thus harm the religious value system.

The monks also contended that history from 1913 on showed that Tibet could maintain its independence without radical solutions or major changes. After the school closed, the government sent a few Tibet-

ans to India for education, but the monastic segment had made their point: they would not tolerate modernization. Thus, when the final showdown with China came in 1950–1951, Tibet had only a handful of officials who spoke English well and virtually none who understood diplomacy and international relations. Moreover, the army had deteriorated to a state of hopeless inefficiency. Although the Taktra government had tried to purchase modern weapons, they feared inviting military instructors from the West or sending large numbers of Tibetan officers abroad. The Tibetan army that ultimately faced the People's Liberation Army was poorly trained, poorly equipped, and pathetically led. Ironically, by trying to protect Tibet's cherished Buddhist values and ideology from possible contamination by Western institutions, the monastic and religious conservatives created a set of conditions whereby the government was unable to defend and preserve those very religious values from the Chinese Communists.

These internal events are by no means the only factors that led to the demise of the Lamaist State. Equally important was the refusal of Tibet's traditional friends and neighbors to provide effective diplomatic and military support. Throughout the period 1913–1947, Britain was Tibet's main supporter and the only noncontiguous country with whom Tibet maintained foreign relations. The British goal during this period was to maintain Tibet as a buffer zone in which Chinese and Russian influence was excluded and British and British Indian interests predominated. Britain did not secure this goal either by offering Tibet substantial assistance toward independence or by incorporating Tibet into its Indian empire as a protectorate, as it had done for Sikkim and Bhutan. Believing that either action would alienate China and Russia and would create serious problems for Britain's international interests, it instead adopted a policy based on the idea of *autonomy* for Tibet within the context of Chinese *suzerainty*, that is to say, de facto independence for Tibet in the context of token subordination to China. Britain articulated this policy in the Simla Convention of 1914.

The Simla agreement gave Britain not only dominant influence in Tibet but also favorable trade rights and the vast territory east of Bhutan known as the North East Frontier Area (today known as Arunachal Pradesh). Tibet reluctantly agreed to the "autonomous" status designated in the Simla agreement, believing that it would permanently

guarantee Chinese noninterference in Tibetan affairs. But China, which gained little from the agreement, refused to ratify it.

Britain, unwilling to let its Simla gains slip away simply because China refused to sign the agreement, opted to make the agreement with Tibet on a *bilateral* basis, since this secured for Britain (and its Indian colony) all the rights contained in the original tripartite agreement. Even so, Britain did not alter its policy of refusing to acknowledge Tibet as a completely independent state, even though the only authority for the rights it now claimed in Tibet (and NEFA) were implicitly based on such an acknowledgment. From 1914 on, Britain dealt with Tibet completely independently of China, but officially it recognized Tibet only as *autonomous* under Chinese *suzerainty.* Britain therefore was unwilling to assist Tibet in securing an independent international status, and it refused to assure Tibet that if China attacked—for example, as a consequence of Tibet actively seeking international recognition of its de facto independent status—Britain would support Tibet militarily.

When Britain left India in 1947, it abandoned its interest in Tibet, yielding all initiative to the newly independent Indian state. Thus, at the time of the 1948 trade mission, instead of trying to foster an independent identity for Tibet, Britain refused even to issue visas on Tibetan passports. And two years later, in December 1950, when Tibet appealed to the United Nations for help, it was the British delegate who spoke first, informing his colleagues on the world body that after a half-century of intimate relations with Tibet, His Majesty's Government felt that the status of Tibet was unclear and suggesting that Tibet's appeal be postponed.

The Tibetan policy of the independent Indian government was similar to that of colonial India in certain respects and widely divergent in other critical areas. The new Indian government sought to continue the bilateral Simla relationship and asked Tibet to recognize them as the successor to the British, that is, to recognize the transfer of all the gains Britain derived from Simla. From the beginning, however, Nehru had no intention of continuing Britain's support of Tibet's de facto independence nor of working to prevent Chinese influence in Tibet. The new Chinese Communist government had unequivocally asserted its *sovereignty* over Tibet and had made it clear that Sino-Indian friendship would be impossible unless India supported China's position with re-

gard to Tibet. Nehru saw Sino-Indian friendship as critical to a new Asia and to the creation of a new moral order in the non-Western world, and he saw Tibet as a threat to that relationship. India also strongly opposed U.S. involvement in the Tibet issue. The Tibetan policy pursued by the Indian government forced Tibet into a settlement with China on China's terms.

After the fall of Chiang Kai-shek, the United States became increasingly interested in Tibet as a bastion of anti-Communist ideology in East Asia. Although in the critical months of November and December 1950 and January 1951, the United States dealt the Tibetan government a painful setback by failing to accept a Tibetan delegation to the United States and by allowing the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations to be set aside, nevertheless, after Tibet signed the Seventeen-Point Agreement with China (Chapter 20), the United States was the only country that expressed any interest in assisting Tibet against the Chinese. It was unwilling openly to support complete independence for Tibet, and it could not offer Tibet military aid because of Indian hostility to U.S. involvement, but it offered to help the Dalai Lama and his large entourage to resettle in exile if he would disavow the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The U.S. offer was not attractive enough to swing opinion in Tibet against the liberal terms offered by the People's Republic of China. When this became evident, the United States tried to enlarge its offers, but it was too late. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government had decided that the best way to preserve their religious polity was to try to work within the terms of the Seventeen-Point Agreement.

POSTSCRIPT

After the 14th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in August 1951, Tibet tried to work with China within the terms of the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The traditional Tibetan government continued to function, albeit with varying degrees of Chinese interference. A series of complicated events rendered this increasingly difficult after 1955, however, and in March 1959, the Dalai Lama and most of his key officials fled to exile in India. In the next two years approximately 80,000 Tibetans also fled, most of them seeking refuge in India, Bhutan, and Nepal. Twenty-eight years later, the 14th Dalai Lama is still a guest of the Indian government.

APPENDIX A

ANGLO-CHINESE CONVENTION OF 1906

Convention between Great Britain and China respecting Tibet. Signed at Peking, April 27 1906 (Ratifications exchanged at London July 23, 1906)

[Signed also in Chinese]

WHEREAS His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of China are sincerely desirous to maintain and perpetuate the relations of friendship and good understanding which now exist between their perspective Empires;

And whereas the refusal of Tibet to recognise the validity of or to carry into full effect the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of March 17, 1890, and Regulations of December 5, 1893, placed the British Government under the necessity of taking steps to secure their rights and interests under the said Convention and Regulations;

And whereas a Convention of ten articles was signed at Lhasa on September 1904, on behalf of Great Britain and Tibet, and was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India on behalf of Great Britain on November 11, 1904, a declaration on behalf of Great Britain modifying its terms under certain conditions being appended thereto;

His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the Emperor of China have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have for this purpose named Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:—

His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland:

Sir Ernest Mason Satow, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, His said Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the Emperor of China;

And His Majesty the Emperor of China:

His Excellency Tong Shoa-yi, His said Majesty's High Commissioner Plenipotentiary and a Vice-President of the Board of Foreign Affairs; who having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and true form have agreed upon and concluded the following Convention in six articles:—

I. The Convention concluded on September 7, 1904, by Great Britain and Tibet, the texts of which in English and Chinese are attached to the present Convention as an annexe, is hereby confirmed, subject to the modification stated in the declaration appended thereto, and both of the High Contracting Parties engage to take at all times such steps as may be necessary to secure the due fulfilment of the terms specified therein.

II. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet. The Government of China also undertakes not to permit any other foreign state to interfere with the territory or internal administration of Tibet.

III. The Concessions which are mentioned in Article IX(d) of the Convention concluded on September 7th, 1904 by Great Britain and Tibet are denied to any state or to the subject of any state other than China, but it has been arranged with China that at the trade marts specified in Article II of the aforesaid Convention Great Britain shall be entitled to lay down telegraph lines connecting with India.

IV. The provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and Regulations of 1893 shall, subject to the terms of this present Convention and annexe thereto, remain in full force.

V. The English and Chinese texts of the present Convention have been carefully compared and found to correspond, but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

VI. This Convention shall be ratified by the Sovereigns of both countries and ratifications shall be exchanged at London within three months after the date of signature by the Plenipotentiaries of both Powers.

In token whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed and sealed this Convention, four copies in English and four in Chinese.

Done at Peking this twenty-seventh day of April, one thousand nine hundred and six, being the fourth day of the fourth month of the thirty-second year of the reign of Kuang-hsu.

ERNEST SATOW.
(Signature and Seal of the
Chinese Plenipotentiary.)

APPENDIX B

ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION OF 1907

Convention between Great Britain and Russia relating to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. Signed at St. Petersburg, August 31st 1907

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, animated by the sincere desire to settle by mutual agreement different questions concerning the interests of their States on the Continent of Asia, have determined to conclude Agreements destined to prevent all cause of misunderstanding between Great Britain and Russia in regard to the questions referred to, and have nominated for this purpose their respective Plenipotentiaries, to wit:

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, the Right Honourable Sir Arthur Nicolson, His Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias;

His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, the Master of his Court Alexander Iswolsky, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

Who, having communicated to each other their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following:—

ARRANGEMENT CONCERNING THIBET

The Governments of Great Britain and Russia recognising the suzerain rights of China in Thibet, and considering the fact that Great Britain, by reason

of her geographical position has a special interest in the maintenance of the status quo in the external relations of Thibet, have made the following arrangement:—

Article I

The two High Contracting Parties engage to respect the territorial integrity of Thibet and to abstain from all interference in the internal admi istration.

Article II

In conformity with the admitted principle of the suzerainty of China over Thibet, Great Britain and Russia engage not to enter into negotiations with Thibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government. This engagement does not exclude the direct relations between British Commercial Agents and the Thibetan authorities provided for in Article V of the Convention between Great Britain and Thibet of the 7th September 1904, and confirmed by the Convention between Great Britain and China of the 27th April 1906; nor does it modify the engagements entered into by Great Britai and China in Article I of the said Convention of 1906.

It is clearly understood that Buddhists, subjects of Great Britain or of Russia, may enter into direct relations on strictly religious matters with the Dalai Lama and the other representatives of Buddhism in Thibet; the Governments of Great Britain and Russia engage, as far as they are concerned, not to allow those relations to infringe the stipulations of the present arrangement.

Article III

The British and Russian Governments respectively engage not to send Representatives to Lhasa.

Article IV

The two High Contracting Parties engage neither to seek nor to obtain, whether for themselves or their subjects, any Concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, and mines, or other rights in Thibet.

Article V

The two Governments agree that no part of the revenues of Thibet, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to Great Britain or Russia or to any of their subjects.

Annexe to the arrangement between Great Britain and Russia concerning Thibet.

Great Britain reaffirms the declaration, signed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and appended to the ratification of the Convention of the 7th September 1904, to the effect that the occupation of the Chumbi Valley by British forces shall cease after the payment of three annual installments of the indemnity of 25,00,000 rupees, provided that the trade marts mentioned in Article II of that Convention have been effectively opened for three years, and that in the meantime the Thibetan authorities have faithfully complied in all respects with the terms of the said Convention of 1904. It is clearly understood that if the occupation of the Chumbi Valley by the British forces has, for any reason, not been terminated at the time anticipated in the above Declaration, the British and Russian Governments will enter upon a friendly exchange of views on this subject.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the ratification exchanged at St. Petersburg as soon as possible.

In witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Convention and affixed thereto their seals.

Done in duplicate at St. Petersburg, the 18th (31st) August 1907.

APPENDIX C

THE SIMLA AGREEMENTS OF 1914

1. CONVENTION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN, CHINA, AND TIBET: SIMLA 1914

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Excellency the President of the Republic of China, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, being sincerely desirous to settle by mutual agreement various questions concerning the interests of their several States on the Continent of Asia, and further to regulate the relations of their several Governments, have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have nominated for this purpose their respective Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire, Companion of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department;

His Excellency the President of the Republic of China, Monsieur Ivan Chen, Officer of the Order of the Chia Ho;

His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Lonchen Ga-den Shatra Pal-jor Dorje; who having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and due form have agreed upon and concluded the following Convention in eleven Articles:—

Article 1

The Convention specified in the Schedule to the present Convention shall, except in so far as they may have been modified by, or may be inconsistent with or repugnant to, any of the provisions of the present Convention, continue to be binding upon the High Contracting Parties.

Article 2

The Governments of Great Britain and China recognising that Tibet is under the suzerainty of China, and recognising also the autonomy of Outer Tibet, engage to respect the territorial integrity of the country, and to abstain from interference in the administration of Outer Tibet (including the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama), which shall remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa.

The Government of China engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it.

Article 3

Recognising the special interest of Great Britain, in virtue of the geographical position of Tibet, in the existence of an effective Tibetan Government, and in the maintenance of peace and order in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of India and adjoining States, the Government of China engages, except as provided in Article 4 of this Convention, not to send troops into Outer Tibet, nor to station civil or military officers, nor to establish Chinese colonies in the country. Should any such troops or officials remain in Outer Tibet at the date of the signature of this Convention, they shall be withdrawn within a period not exceeding three months.

The Government of Great Britain engages not to station military or civil officers in Tibet (except as provided in the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet) nor troops (except the Agents' escorts), nor to establish colonies in that country.

Article 4

The foregoing Article shall not be held to preclude the continuance of the arrangements by which, in the past, a Chinese high official with suitable escort

has been maintained at Lhasa, but it is hereby provided that the said escort shall in no circumstances exceed 300 men.

Article 5

The Governments of China and Tibet engage that they will not enter into any negotiations or agreements regarding Tibet with one another, or with any other Power, excepting such negotiations and agreements between Great Britain and Tibet as are provided for by the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet and the Convention of April 27, 1906, between Great Britain and China.

Article 6

Article III of the Convention of April 27, 1906, between Great Britain and China is hereby cancelled, and it is understood that in Article IX(d) of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet the term 'Foreign Power' does not include China.

Not less favourable treatment shall be accorded to British commerce than to the commerce of China or the most favoured nation.

Article 7

(a) The Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893 and 1908 are hereby cancelled.

(b) The Tibetan Government engages to negotiate with the British Government new Trade Regulations for Outer Tibet to give effect to Articles II, IV and V of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet without delay; provided always that such Regulations shall in no way modify the present Convention except with the consent of the Chinese Government.

Article 8

The British Agent who resides at Gyantse may visit Lhasa with his escort whenever it is necessary to consult with the Tibetan Government regarding matters arising out of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great

Britain and Tibet, which it has been found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or otherwise.

Article 9

For the purpose of the present Convention the borders of Tibet, and the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet, shall be as shown in red and blue respectively on the map attached hereto.

Nothing in the present Convention shall be held to prejudice the existing rights of the Tibetan Government in Inner Tibet, which include the power to select and appoint the high priests of monasteries and to retain full control in all matters affecting religious institutions.

Article 10

The English, Chinese and Tibetan texts of the present Convention have been carefully examined and found to correspond, but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

Article 11

The present Convention will take effect from the date of signature.

If token whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed and sealed this Convention, three copies in English, three in Chinese and three in Tibetan.

Done at Simla this third day of July, A.D., one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, corresponding with the Chinese date, the third day of the seventh month of the third year of the Republic, and the Tibetan date, the tenth day of the fifth month of the Wood-Tiger year.

Initial of the Lonchen Shatra.
(Initialled) A.H.M.
Seal of the Lonchen Shatra.
Seal of the British Plenipotentiary.

SCHEDULE

1. Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet, signed at Calcutta the 17th March 1890.

2. Convention between Great Britain and Tibet, signed at Lhasa the 7th September 1904.

3. Convention between Great Britain and China respecting Tibet, signed at Peking the 27th April 1906.

The notes exchanged are to the following effect:—

1. It is understood by the High Contracting Parties that Tibet forms part of Chinese territory.

2. After the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama by the Tibetan Government, the latter will notify the installation to the Chinese Government whose representative at Lhasa will then formally communicate to His Holiness the titles consistent with his dignity, which have been conferred by the Chinese Government.

3. It is also understood that the selection and appointment of all officers i Outer Tibet will rest with the Tibetan Government.

4. Outer Tibet shall not be represented in the Chinese Parliament or in any other similar body.

5. It is understood that the escorts attached to the British Trade Agencies in Tibet shall not exceed seventy-five per centum of the escort of the Chinese Representative at Lhasa.

6. The Government of China is hereby released from its engagements under Article III of the Convention of March 17, 1890, between Great Britain and China to prevent acts of aggression from the Tibetan side of the Tibet-Sikkim frontier.

7. The Chinese high official referred to in Article 4 will be free to enter Tibet as soon as the terms of Article 3 have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of representatives of the three signatories to this Convention, who will investigate and report without delay.

Initials and seals of: H. McMahon, Chen I-Fan, Lonchen Shatra.

2. ANGLO-TIBETAN DECLARATION OF 3 JULY 1914

Declaration appended to the 3 July 1914 text of the Simla Convention

We, the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and Tibet, hereby record the following Declaration to the effect that we acknowledge the annexed Convention as initialled to be binding on the governments of Great Britain and Tibet, and

we agree that so long as the Government of China withholds signature to the aforesaid Convention, she will be debarred from the enjoyment of all privileges accruing therefrom.

In token whereof we have signed and sealed this Declaration, two copies in English and two in Tibetan.

Done at Simla this third day of July, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, corresponding with the Tibetan date, the tenth day of the fifth month of the Wood-Tiger year.

Seal of the Dalai Lama (signed)	A. Henry McMahon British Plenipotentiary
Signature and seal of the Lonchen Shatra	Seal of the British Plenipotentiary

Seal of the Drepung Monastery	Seal of the Sera Monastery	Seal of the Gaden Monastery	Seal of the National Assembly

3. ANGLO-TIBETAN TRADE REGULATIONS—3 JULY 1914

Whereas by Article 7 of the Convention concluded between the Governments of Great Britain, China and Tibet on the third day of July, A.D. 1914, the Trade Regulations of 1893 and 1908 were cancelled and the Tibetan Government engaged to negotiate with the British Government new Trade Regulations for Outer Tibet to give effect to Articles II, IV and V of the Convention of 1904;

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet have for this purpose named as their Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, Sir A. H. McMahon, G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.:

His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Lonchen Ga-den Shatra Pal-jor Dorje;

And whereas Sir A. H. McMahon and Lonchen Ga-den Shatra Pal-jor Dorje have communicated to each other since their respective full powers and

have found them to be in good and true form, the following Regulations have been agreed upon:—

I. The area falling within a radius of three miles from the British Trade Agency site will be considered as the area of such Trade Mart.

It is agreed that British subjects may lease lands for the building of houses and godowns at the Marts. This arrangement shall not be held to prejudice the right of British subjects to rent houses and godowns outside the Marts for their own accommodation and the storage of their goods. British subjects desiring to lease building sites shall apply through the British Trade Agent to the Tibetan Trade Agent. In consultation with the British Trade Agent the Tibetan Trade Agent will assign such or other suitable building sites without unnecessary delay. They shall fix the terms of the leases in conformity with the existing laws and rates.

II. The administration of the Trade Marts shall remain with the Tibetan Authorities, with the exception of the British Trade Agency sites and compounds of the rest-houses, which will be under the exclusive control of the British Trade Agents.

The Trade Agents at the Marts and Frontier Officers shall be of suitable rank, and shall hold personal intercourse and correspondence with one another on terms of mutual respect and friendly treatment.

III. In the event of disputes arising at the Marts or on the routes to the Marts between British subjects and subjects of other nationalities, they shall be enquired into and settled in personal conference between the British and Tibetan Trade Agents at the nearest Mart. Where there is a divergence of view the law of the country to which the defendant belongs shall guide.

All questions in regard to rights, whether of property or person, arising between British subjects, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the British Authorities.

British subjects, who may commit any crime at the Marts or on the routes to the Marts, shall be handed over by the Local Authorities to the British Trade Agent at the Mart nearest to the scene of the offence, to be tried and punished according to the laws of India, but such British subjects shall not be subjected by the Local Authorities to any ill-usage in excess of necessary restraint.

Tibetan subjects, who may be guilty of any criminal act towards British subjects, shall be arrested and punished by the Tibetan Authorities according to law.

Should it happen that a Tibetan subject or subjects bring a criminal complaint against a British subject or subjects before the British Trade Agent, the Tibetan Authorities shall have the right to send a representative or representatives of suitable rank to attend the trial in the British Trade Agent's Court. Similarly in cases in which a British subject or subjects have reason to complain

against a Tibetan subject or subjects, the British Trade Agent shall have the right to send a representative or representatives to the Tibetan Trade Agent's Court to attend the trial.

IV. The Government of India shall retain the right to maintain the telegraph lines from the Indian frontier to the Marts. Tibetan messages will be duly received and transmitted by these lines. The Tibetan Authorities shall be responsible for the due protection of the telegraph lines from the Marts to the Indian frontier, and it is agreed that all persons damaging the lines or interfering with them in any way or with the officials engaged in the inspection or maintenance thereof shall at once be severely punished.

V. The British Trade Agents at the various Trade Marts now or hereafter to be established in Tibet may make arrangements for the carriage and transport of their posts to and from the frontier of India. The couriers employed in conveying these posts shall receive all possible assistance from the Local Authorities whose districts they traverse, and shall be accorded the same protection and facilities as the persons employed in carrying the despatches of the Tibetan Government.

No restrictions whatever shall be placed on the employment by British officers and traders of Tibetan subjects in any lawful capacity. The persons so employed shall not be exposed to any kind of molestation or suffer any loss of civil rights, to which they may be entitled as Tibetan subjects, but they shall not be exempted from lawful taxation. If they be guilty of any criminal act, they shall be dealt with by the Local Authorities according to law without any attempt on the part of their employer to screen them.

VI. No rights of monopoly as regards commerce or industry shall be granted to any official or private company, institution, or individual in Tibet. It is of course understood that companies and individuals, who have already received such monopolies from the Tibetan Government previous to the conclusions of this agreement, shall retain their rights and privileges until the expiry of the period fixed.

VII. British subjects shall be at liberty to deal in kind or in money, to sell their goods to whomsoever they please, to hire transport of any kind, and to conduct in general their business transactions in conformity with local usage and without any vexations, restrictions or oppressive exactions whatever. The Tibetan Authorities will not hinder the British Trade Agents or other British subjects from holding personal intercourse or correspondence with the inhabitants of the country.

It being the duty of the Police and the Local Authorities to afford efficient protection at all times to the persons and property of the British subjects at the Marts and along the routes to the Marts, Tibet engages to arrange effective Police measures at the Marts and along the routes to the Marts.

VIII. Import and export in the following Articles:—
arms, ammunition, military stores, liquors and intoxicating
or narcotic drugs.

may at the option of either Government be entirely prohibited, or permitted only on such conditions as either Government on their own side may think fit to impose.

IX. The present Regulations shall be in force for a period of ten years reckoned from the date of signature by the two Plenipotentiaries; but, if no demand for revision be made on either side within six months after the end of the first ten years the Regulations shall remain in force for another ten years from the end of the first ten years; and so it shall be at the end of each successive ten years.

X. The English and Tibetan texts of the present Regulations have been carefully compared, but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

XI. The present Regulations shall come into force from the date of signature. Done at Simla this third day of July, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, corresponding with the Tibetan date, the tenth day of the fifth month of the Wood-Tiger year.

Seal of the
Dalai Lama.

Signature of the Lönchen Shatra.	A. Henry McMahon British Plenipotentiary.
Seal of the Lönchen Shatra.	Seal of the British Plenipotentiary.

Seal of the Drepung Monastery.	Seal of the Sera Monastery.	Seal of the Gaden Monastery.	Seal of the National Assembly.

4. THE McMAHON LINE EXCHANGE OF NOTES, 24 MARCH 1914

A. McMahon to the Lonchen Shatra, 24 March 1914

To
Lonchen Shatra
Tibetan Plenipotentiary

In February last you accepted the India-Tibet frontier from the Isu Razi Pass to the Bhutan frontier, as given in the map (two sheets), of which two

copies are herewith attached, subject to the confirmation of your Government and the following conditions:

(a) The Tibetan ownership of private estates on the British side of the frontier will not be disturbed.

(b) If the sacred places of Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa fall within a day's march of the British side of the frontier, they will be included in Tibetan territory and the frontier modified accordingly.

I understand that your Government have now agreed to this frontier subject to the above two conditions.

You wished to know whether certain dues now collected by the Tibetan Government at Tsona Jong and in Kongbu and Kham from the Monpas and Lopas for articles sold may still be collected. Mr. Bell has informed you that such details will be settled in a friendly spirit, when you have furnished him with the further information, which you promised.

The final settlement of this India-Tibet frontier will help to prevent causes of future dispute and thus cannot fail to be of great advantage to both governments.

Delhi (Signed) A. H. McMahon,
British Plenipotentiary.

B. The Lönchen Shatra to McMahon, 25 March 1914 (Translation)

To

Sir Henry McMahon

British Plenipotentiary to the China-Tibet Conference.

As it was feared that there might be friction in future unless the boundary between India and Tibet is clearly defined, I submitted the map, which you sent me in February last, to Lhasa for orders. I have now received orders from Lhasa, and I accordingly agree to the boundary as marked in red in the two copies of the maps signed by you subject to the conditions, mentioned in your letter, dated the 24th March, sent to me through Mr. Bell. I have signed and sealed the two copies of the maps. I have kept one copy here and return herewith the other.

Sent on the 29th day of the 1st Month of the Wood-Tiger year (25th March 1914) by Lönchen Shatra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary.

Seal of the
Lönchen Shatra

GLOSSARY OF TIBETAN TERMS

amban	political commissioner of the Manchu emperor of China
chantsö	manager of an incarnate lama's labrang
chigyab khembo	highest monk official in the government bureaucracy
depön	army commander
dobdo	deviant "fighting" monk
drönyerchemmo	monk official who is head of the Dalai Lama's personal staff
dzasa	(1) high rank in the Tibetan government; (2) manager of the labrang of the regent (e.g., Reting Dzasa)
geshe	scholar monk who has completed highest degree in monastic education system
gyagpön	lieutenant in the Tibetan army
khamtsen	a residential unit in a college of the Three Seats
khencung	monk official of the fourth rank
labrang	the corporation of a lama
lönchen	the chief minister
rimshi	a fourth-rank official
rupön	captain in the Tibetan army
shagtsang	the household of a monk official or monk
shape	one of the four heads of the Kashag, the highest government office
tratsang	college-type unit in large monasteries
trungtsi(gye)	member of the committee consisting of the four trunyichemmo and the four tsipöns
trunyichemmo	one of the four heads of the Yigtsang, the highest monk-official office
tsipön	one of the four heads of the Tsigang, the Revenue Office

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2. ORAL INTERVIEWS

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Canglocen, Wanam, grandson of Canglocen Khung; Tibet.
Chamba [A], *dobdo* monk from Sera Che college; India.
Chamba [B], *dobdo* monk from Sera Che college; Tibet.
Changöba, Dorje Ngodrup, lay official; Tibet.
Chanjula. *See* Lungshar Chanjula.
Chünden Drogar, niece of Surkhang Shape; U.S.A.

Dalai Lama, India.
Dardo (Rimpoche), incarnate lama from Drepung's Loseling college; India.
Dunggar (Lobsang Trinley), incarnate lama and professor, Tibet.
Gelek (Rimpoche), incarnate lama from Drepung Loseling college and son of Demo Rimpoche; India.
Gyari Nyima, Khamba from Nyarong; India.
Gyentsen Tempel, monk official from Gyambumgang's household; Tibet.
Horkhang (Sey), former lay official; Tibet.
Horsur, former lay official; India.
Kapshöba, former lay official; Tibet.
Köncho Samden, steward of Drigung Labrang; India.
Kundeling Dzasa, chief administrator of Kundeling Labrang; India.
Lhalu, former lay official; Tibet.
Lhalungpa, former monk official; U.S.A.
Lobsang Chönden, Sera Che monk present at time of the Sera War of 1947; Tibet.
Lobsang Gyentsen, Tibetan monk; Tibet.
Lungshar Chanjula, son of Lungshar; India.
Maya, former lay official; India.
Ngawang Döndrup, former monk official; India.
Ngawang Trinley, Reting's junior attendant; Tibet.
Norbu Dramdü, Khado Rimpoche's servant—one of the four people who tried to assassinate Lhalu in 1945; Tibet.
Pandenla, attendant at Tricang Labrang; India.
Pawang, historian; Tibet.
Pema Dorje, household official of the Sera Che abbot Ngawang Namgye; India [taped interview made by Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala].
Phabongka Chantsö, manager of Phabongka Labrang; India.
Phüntso Tashi, brother-in-law of the 14th Dalai Lama; India.
Reting Dzasa, head administrator of Reting Labrang; Tibet.
Richardson, H. E., former Indian Government official in Lhasa; Britain.
Sambo (Rimshi), former lay official; India.
Shakabpa, former lay official; India, U.S.A.
Shatra, former lay official; Tibet.
Shingsa Awala, former monk official; India.
Shukoba, former lay official; U.S.A.
Sogo Geshela, Mongolian monk from Drepung Gomang college; India.
Song Rimpoche, former abbot of Ganden Shartse college; India.
Surkhang (Wangchen Gelek), former lay official; U.S.A.

Taktse (Rimpoche), brother of 14th Dalai Lama; U.S.A.
Taring (Jigma), Lady Taring (Rinchen Drolma), and Sambo, former officials; India.
Taring (Jigme), former lay official; India.
Tashi Döndrup, former soldier in Tibetan army; India.
Temba Chönden, Upper Tantric college monk; India.
Thubten Sanggye, former monk official; India.
Thubten Thuwang, *geshe* from Sera Che college; India.
Trinley Dorje, Lhasa resident; Tibet.
Trinley Thargye, manager of Phabongka Labrang; India.
Tsarong (Rimshi), former lay official; U.S.A.
Urgyenla, former monk official; India.
Wangdu, *shenggo* in Kusung Regiment of Tibetan army; India.
Yeshe Thargye, former monk official; Tibet.

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CORRECT TIBETAN SPELLINGS

adala	a dwa lags
akar songa	a dkar so nga
aka trulku	a kag sprul sku
amban	am ban
amdo	a mdo
anadawa	a nan zla ba
ancanali	a 'byang sna leb
apcho	ab cog
apsola	ab sog lags
ara gaapo	a rag dkar po
ba	'ba'
babshi	'babs zhib
bamtsong	'bam tshong
banag	sba nag
ba-nak kha-sum	sba nag kha gsum
barkor	bar skor
batang	'ba' thang
bayi (tsang)	sba ye (tshang)
beri	be re
betsang	be tshang
bho	*see* bo
bhodong tashigang	ba dong bkris sgang
bo	'bo
bökhangwa	sbod khang pa
bönbo	bon po
bönshö	bon shod

bumtang	'bum thang
cadang	ca dang
cagla	lcags la
canglo	lcang lo
canglocen (wanam) or (khung) or (sonam gyebo)	lcang lo can (dbang rnam) or (gung) or (bsod nams rgyal po)
cangra	lcang ra
cangseshar	lcang seb shar
canjula	byang chub lags
cawtang	lcog steng
censeling	spyan gsal gling
cetrungla	rje drung lags
chaba rusu	cha pa ru zur
chabu	phyag sbug
chadang	cha dang
chagotsang tomten	bya rgod tshang stobs ldan
chalu	'cha' lu
chamba (la)	byams pa (lags)
chamba chodar	byams pa chos dar
chamba chödrak	byams pa chos grags
chamba ngawang	byams pa ngag dbang
chamba tendar	byams pa bstan dar
chamba yeshe	byams pa ye shes
chamdo	chab mdo
chamjom pawo chupdün	cham 'joms dpa' bo bcu bdun
chamjom pawo chupshi	cham 'joms dpa' bo bcu bshi
chamnag	cham nag
chamön (depa)	byams smon (sde pa)
chamsu	byams zur
chandzö	*see* chantsö
chang	chang
changkhyim (ba)	chang khyim (pa)
changöba (dorje ngodrup)	byang ngos pa (rdo rje dngos sgrub)
changtang	byang thang
changtse chöje	byang rtse chos rje
chanjula	*see* lungshar
chantsö	phyag mdzod
chasur (depa)	byams zur (sde pa)
chayang	chag yangs
chayul	bya yul

che	byes
chenresig	spyan ras gzigs
chenseling(a)	*see* censeling
cheputsuntanpa	rje btsun dam pa
chera	bye rag
chibisey	byi sbi sras
chidam	spyi dam
chigyab khembo	spyi khyab mkhan po
chigyay laygung	phyi rgyal las khungs
chingba	bying pa
chipön	chibs dpon
chiso	spyi gso
chisu	phyi zur
chitey	'chi ltas
chiwa	byi ba
chizong	spyi rdzong
chödar	chos dar
chödrag or (chosdrak)	chos grags
chögo	chos gos
chögye nyima	chos rgyal nyi ma
chöje	chos rje
chökhor	chos 'khor
chökhorgön	chos 'khor dgon
chökhorgyal	chos 'khor rgyal
chökyi nyima	chos kyi nyi ma
chökyong	chos skyong
chola chambala	jo lags byams pa lags
chöling	mchod gling
chölön dorje tricung	chos blon rdo rje khri chung
chömpel	chos 'phel
chömpel gyebo	chos 'phel rgyal po
chömpel thubten	chos 'phel thub bstan
chöney	mchod gnas
chöntse	chos mdzad
chöntse gendün	chos mdzad dge 'dun
chöntse tenzin (gyatso)	chos mdzad bstan 'dzin (rgya mtsho)
chöponla	chos dpon lags
chorten karpo	*see* chöten karpo
chösi nyitrel	chos srid gnyis 'brel
chospel thubten	*see* chömpel thubten

chotang	*see* cawtang
chöten karpo	mchod rten dkar po
chöyön	mchod yon
chumbi	chu 'bi
chünden drogar	chos ldan sgrol dkar
chungnay	'byung gnas
chupsang	chu bzang
chüshul	chu shul
chuting (gang)	chos steng (khang)
cogtray	lcogs bkras
cöngachöpa	bco lnga mchod pa
corca	'byor lcag
dadang	da dang
dadang cam	mda' dang lcam
dagchen rimpoche	bdag chen rin po che
dahen	*see* darhan
dam	'dam
dama	*see* damaru
damaru	da ma ru
dardo (rimpoche)	dar mdo (rin po che)
dardzong	rta rdzong
dargye (gompa)	dar rgyas (dgon pa)
darhan	dar han
dartsedo	dar rtse mdo
dashi	mda' gzhis
datang	*see* dadang
dawala	zla ba lags
dayik	mda' yig
decang	lde 'chang
dechen (chödrön)	bde chen (chos sgron)
dechin	*see* dechen
dege	*see* derge
delerabden	bde legs rab rten
delerapten	*see* delerabden
demo (labrang or rimpoche)	bde mo (bla brang) or (rin po che)
dengko	*see* dengo
dengo	ldan khog
densa sum	gdan sa gsum
denshu	gdan zhu
depa	sde pa

depön	mda' dpon
depön mitra	mda' dpon mi drag
derge	sde dge
derge sey	sde dge sras
derkye	*see* derge
desi	sde srid
detsab	*see* detshab
detshab	sde tshab
dey	gtad
deyang (college)	bde yang (grwa tshang)
deyangshar	bde yang shar
deyang tshenship	bde yang mtshan zhabs
digyu	rdo rgyugs
dimchi	dim chi
dingja (dorje gyentsen)	sding bya (rdo rje rgyal mtshan)
dingri	ding ri
dirang dzong	de rang rdzong
ditru	sde drug
diu	rdo'u
dobdo	rdab rdob
dode	'dog sde
dogdzong	rdog rdzong
dokham	mdo khams
dolma	sgrol ma
dombo	sdom po
döndrub	don grub
doring	rdo ring
dorje	rdo rje
dorje gyentsen	rdo rje rgyal mtshan
dorje ngudrup	rdo rje dngos grub
dorje phüntso	rdo rje phun tshogs
dorje tsegyal	rdo rje tshe rgyal
dose	rdo sras
dotse	rdo tshad
draktön(ba)	drags don (pa)
dralha	dgra lha
drayab	brag g.yab
drepung (loseling)	'bras spungs (blo gsal gling)
dri	'dri
driblung	*see* triblung

drigung	’bri gung
drimekunden	dri med kun ldan
drimeykunden	*see* drimekunden
driyü	’bri yul
drogang	spro khang
drogar	sgrol dkar
drom	’brom
drönyerchemmo	mgron gnyer chen mo
drugu (gön)	gru gu (dgon)
drungtog	drung gtogs
dugara	’brug rag
dumra (wa)	ldum rag (ba)
dunggar (lobsang trinley)	dung dkar (blo bzang ’phrin las)
düwa	’dul ba
dzasa	dza sag
dzong	rdzong
dzongpön	rdzong dpon
e	e
epa	*see* itrugpa
ga	’gag ; bka’
gacan demba	dga’ byang bstan pa
gadang	ga dang
gadong	dga’ gdong
gamto druga	skam thog gru kha
ganden	dga’ ldan
ganden chökor	dga’ ldan chos ’khor
ganden photrang	dga’ ldan pho brang
ganden rapten	dga’ ldan rab brtan
ganden thri (ba) (rimpoche)	dga’ ldan khri (pa) (rin po che)
ganden thrisur	dga’ ldan khri zur
gandre drungche	dga’ ’bras drung che
gandre drungsum	dga’ ’bras drung gsum
gangto druga	*see* gamto druga
gardrugpa	gar phrug pa
garma	skar ma
gartok	sgar thok
gashi	bka’ gzhis
gay	kye
geda (trulku) or (lama)	dge stag (sprul sku) (bla ma)
gegen	dge rgan
gegö	dge bskos

gelek (rimpoche)	dge legs (rin po che)
gelong	dge slong
gelugpa	dge lugs pa
gempö utse	dge 'phel dbu rtse
genden	*see* gendün
gendün (la)	dge 'dun (lags)
gendün chömpel	dge 'dun chos 'phel
gergi	sger dge
gerka	sger dgal
geshe(la)	dge bshes (lags)
geshe lharampa	dge bshes lha ram pa
geshe samdrup rimpoche	dge bshes bsam grub rin po che
geshe sherab gyatso	*see* sherab gyatso
getsul	dge tshul
giamda	rgya mda'
gogpala	'gog pa la
gola (pass)	sgo la
golok	mgo log
gomang	sgo mang
gomba	dgon pa
gombey kudra	dgon pa'i sku drag
gombo	mgon po
gonggo (khamtsen)	kong po (khang mtshan)
gongja	kong phyag
gongye meypachi	dgongs 'gal med pa byed
gonjo	go 'jo
go riri	mgo ril ril
gorkhawa	sgo dkar ba
gorship	gor zhib
göshamba	gos sham pa
gothe gyab	sgo mthil rgyabs
gowochöje (lobsang sonam)	go bo chos rje (blo bzang bsod nams)
gronyer	mgron gnyer
guden	*see* guten
gunam	skur rnam
gung	gung
gungö	sku ngo
gu nyepo chung medro, thucheche	sku mnyel po byung med 'gro, thugs rje che
guru	gu ru

guten	sku gdan
gyabden	skyabs rten
gyagpön (kesang)	brgya dpon (skal bzang)
gyagpönphu	rgya dpon bu
gyagpöntsang	rgya dpon tshang
gyajong	rgya sbyong
gyalo dündrup	*see* gyalo thündrup
gyalo thündrup	gya lo don grub
gyaltakpa	*see* gyetakba
gyaltsen	*see* gyentsen
gyambumgang	rgya 'bum khang
gyambumkang	*see* gyambumgang
gyantse	rgyal rtse
gyari nyima	rgya ri nyi ma
gyarong	rgyal rong
gyase garpo	rgya se dkar po
gyatso	rgya mtsho
gye	'gyed
gyeba	rgyas pa
gyebo	rgyal po
gyebo sherpa	rgyal po shar pa
gyekar nangba	rgyal mkhar nang pa
gyentsen	rgyal mtshan
gyentsen phüntso	rgyal mtshan phun tshogs
gyentsen sengge	rgyal mtshan seng ge
gyentsen tempel	rgyal mtshan bstan 'phel
gyepa	*see* gyeba
gyetakba	rgyas dag pa
gyetor	brgyad gtor
gyetru hutuktu	rgyal sprul ho thog thu
gyeyab	rgyal yab
gyüma	dkyus ma
gyurme (namgyel)	'gyur med (rnam rgyal)
gyutö	rgyud stod
hamdong (khamtsen)	har gdong (khang mtsan)
hocin	ho cin
hor	hor
horkhang(sey)	hor khang (sras)
horsur	hor zur
hor trachen	hor sbra chen

hutuk(to) (tu)	ho thog thu
itrugpa	e phrug pa
jadang	ja dang
jagsam	lcags zam
jampa chöwang	byams pa chos dbang
jampa thogme	byams pa thogs me
jampa tshutrim	byams pa tshul khrims
jampa wosel	byams pa 'o zer
jampeyang	'jam dpal dbyangs
jampey gyatso	'jam dpal rgyal mtsho
jampey gyentsen	'jam dpal rgyal mtshan
jampey yeshe	'jam dpal ye shes
jamyang delek	'jam dbyangs bde legs
jamyang gyaltsen	'jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan
jangsebshar	*see* cangseshar
jaranay	sbyar ra nas
jayan	'jam dbyang
jensey (namgang)	spyan gsal (gnang gang)
jenshu	spyan zhu
jetrungla	rje drung lags
jetsün dampa	rje btsun dam pa
jokhang	jo khang
jola	jo lags
jomda	'jo mda'
jonangpa	jo nang pa
jongpen	*see* dzongpön
jongpoen	*see* dzongpön
jora	jo ra
jun	'jun
jungnay	'byung gnas
jupön	bcu dpon
jyekundo	skye rgu mdo
kabten	skab bstan
kadampa	bka' gdams pa
kadang	ka dang
kadrung	bka' drung
kajupa	bka' rgyud pa
kalaktang	kha la thang
kalon	bka' blon
kalung	bka' lung

kampajong	gam pa rdzong
kandrön	bka’ mgron
kang	rkang
kangyur	bka’ ’gyur
kanze	dkar mdzes
kapshöba(sey)	ka shod pa (sras)
karchung(a)	dkar chung (ba)
karma (pa)	karma (pa)
kashag	bka’ shag
kaship nubling	bka’ zhib num gling
katak	kha btags
kathang	bka’ thang
kawu	ga’u
ke	khal
kendrönlosum	mkhan mgron lo gsum
kesang	skal bzang
kesang ngawang	skal bzang ngag dbang
kesang tsultrim	skal bzang tshul ,khrim
kesang wangdu	skal bzang dbang ’dus
ketsang (trulku) (rimpoche)	ke’u tshang (sprul sku) (rin po che)
ketsang ritrö	skal tshang ri khrod
khadang	kha dang
kham	khams
khamba	khams pa
khamtsen	khang mtshan
khangchennay	khang chen nas
khangser (rimpoche)	khang ser (rin po che)
khantsin	kha ’dzin
kharak yongdzin rimpoche	kha rag yongs ’dzin rin po che
khardo lama	mkhar rdo bla ma
khatsara	kha tsha ra
khembo	mkhan po
kheme (dzasa) (rimshi)	khe smad (dza sag) (rim bzhi)
khempo	*see* khembo
khenche(n)	mkhan che(n)
khenchung	*see* khencung
khencung	mkhan chung
khendrönlosum	mkhan mgron lo gsum
khenrab künsang	mkhyen rab kun bzang
khenrab norbu	mkhyen rab nor bu

khenrab phuntso(k)	mkhyen rab phun tshogs
khenrab tenzin	mkhyen rab bstan 'dzin
khenrab wangchug	mkhyen rab dbang phyug
khensam (mondo)	mkhyen bsam (smon grong)
khensur	mkhan zur
khogön	kog khun
khung	gung
khyungpo (serta)	khyung po (ser rta)
khyungpo trunyi phula	khyung po drung yig bu lags
khyungram	khyung ram
kisur	skyid zur
kitöpa	skyid stod pa
köncho (chungnay)	dkon mchog ('byung gnas)
könchok	*see* köncho
köncho samden	dkon mchog bsam bstan
kongbo	*see* kongpo
kongpo	kong po
kongpo trinley	kong po 'phrin las
kongtru(la) (thubten genden)	kong phrug (lags) (thub bstan dge ldan)
korsum	'khor gsum
kucar (dzasa)	sku bcar (dza sag)
kudra	sku drag
kumbela	kun 'phel lags
kumbum	sku 'bum
kunbila	*see* kumbela
küncho chungnay	*see* köncho (chungnay)
künchog jungne	*see* köncho (chungnay)
kundeling (dzasa)	kun bde gling (dza sag)
kung	*see* gung
kunga (wangchug)	kun dga' (dbang phyug)
kunphela	*see* kumbela
kunphel la	*see* kumbela
künsang	kun bzang
kusantse	sku bzang rtse
kusho	sku zhabs
kyibu	skyid sbug
kyicho küntün	skyid phyogs kun mthun
kyipup	*see* kyibu
kyishong	skyid shong

kyitöpa	skyid stod pa
kyitse luding	skyid 'tshal klu lding
kyushung	khyu gzhung
labrang	bla brang
labrang chantsö	bla brang phyag mdzod
lachag	*see* laja
lachi	bla spyi
ladakh	la dwags
ladenla	legs ldan lags
lagaphu	la kha bu
lagatsang	la kha tshang
lagong-ngamda	la gong rngam zla
laja	bla phyag
la la	lags lags
lama	bla ma
lama shunglenba	bla ma gzhung len pa
lamda	lam mda'
lamrim	lam rim
lamyik (or lamyig)	lam yig
langchen nyochu	glang chen mnyo chu
langchen risur	glang chen ri zur
langcunga	glang chung ba
langdün	glang mdun
langong-ngamda	*see* lagong ngamda
laya charipa	rla ya bya ril ba
laygung	*see* leykung
leykung	las khungs
lhachag	*see* laja
lhading (se)	lha sding (sras)
lhalu (tsewang dorje)	lha klu (tshe dbang rdo rje)
lhalungpa	lha lung pa
lhamo	lha mo
lhamolatso	lha mo bla mtsho
lhapeb	lha phebs
lhapso	lha gsol
lharampa	lha ram pa
lharigo	lha ri ko
lhasa	lha sa
lhatse	lha rtse
lhautara	lha'u rta ra

lhedingse	*see* lhading (se)
lheting	*see* lhading
lhoba lhoka	lho pa blo dga'
lhodzong	lho rdzong
lhoka	lho ka
lhopa	*see* lhoba
lhopey gartrug	lho pa'i gar phrug
lhundrup dzong	lhun 'grub rdzong
lingbu dzong	gling bu rdzong
litang	li thang
liushar	sne'u shar
lobsang chhogyen	blo bzang chos rgyan
lobsang chochog	blo bzang chos mchog
lobsang chömpel	blo bzang chos 'phel
lobsang chönden	blo bzang chos ldan
lobsang gyentsen	blo bzang rgyal mtshan
lobsang lhalungpa	blo bzang lha lung pa
lobsang namgyel	blo bzang rnam rgyal
lobsang norbu	blo bzang nor bu
lobsang samden	blo bzang bsam gtan
lobsang sonam	blo bzang bsod nams
lobsang tashi	blo bzang bkris
lobsang tempa	blo bzang bstan pa
lobsang tenkyong	blo bzang bstan skyong
lobsang tenzing	blo bzang bstan 'dzin
lobsang tshewang	blo bzang tshe dbang
lobsang wangchug	blo bzang dbang phyug
lobsang wanggye	blo bzang dbang rgyal
lobzang chhogyen	*see* lobsang chhogyen
lo gendün	blo dge 'dun
lönchen	blon chen
longma	klong ma
loseling	blo gsal gling
losey döndrup	blo gsal don grub
lotru	blo phrug
lotsawa	lo tsa ba
lukhang (wa)	klu khang (ba)
lumbum (khamtsen)	klu 'bum (khang mtshan)
lumpa	lum pa
lungling	lung gling

lungshar(pa)	lung shar (pa)
lungshar chanjula	lung shar byang chub lags
lungshi(gön)	rlung gshod (dgon)
lungsho	*see* lungshi
magji tshondzin	dmag spyi tsho 'dzin
magsi uyon lhengang	dmag srid u yon lhan khang
magtrung tamding	dmag drung rta mgrin
makang	dmag rkang
markham	smar kham
markham gartok	smar kham sgar thog
marlamba	smar lam ba
matragongsum	smar brag gong gsum
maya (tsewang gyurme)	rma bya (tshe dbang 'gyur med)
menriba	sman ri ba
metrul gatsa	me sprul bka' rtsa
mey	smad
mibab jenshu	mi babs spyan zhu
mibo	mi bogs
mikhung	mi khungs
mili	smi li
mindropo	smin 'grub sbug
mindrup	smin 'grub
minyag ami (yeshe wangden)	mi nyag(s) a mes (ye shes dbang ldan)
mipön	mi dpon
miser	mi ser
miser thromo	mi gsod khro mo
mitra	mi drag
mitsen	mi mtshan
mitshen	*see* mitsen
mönlam (chemo)	smon lam (chen mo)
möndrong(pa)	smon grong (pa)
möndrong samba	smon grong zam pa
mönpa	mon pa
mugi gyagba	mu ge rgyag pa
mucha (depön)	mu bya (mda' dpon)
muru	rme ru
nachen	sna chen
nagchuka	nag chu kha
namdra (sherab)	rnam grwa (shes rab)

namgang	gnang sgang
namkye tratsang	rnam rgyal grwa tshang
namkye tsedron	rnam rgyal tshe sgron
namling	rnam gling
namring	*see* ngamring
namru	gnam ru
namsa denshu	nam bza' gdan zhu
namseling	rnam sras gling
namtröla	rnam grol lags
nangar (wa)	*see* nangkarwa
nangartse	gnam dkar rtse
nangba	nang pa
nangchen	nang chen
nangkarwa	snang dkar ba
nangmagang	nang ma khang
nangtseshar	snang rtse shar
nechung	gnas chung
nedong (gongma)	sne gdong (gong ma)
nendrön	sne mgron
neycam	sne lcam
neysar	sne gsar
ngabö	nga bod
ngadang	nga dang
ngagchen (trungchi)	sngags chen (drung che)
ngagpa (tratsang)	sngag pa (grwa tshang)
ngagpa khembo	sngag pa mkhan po
ngamring	ngam ring
ngari korsum	mnga' ri 'khor gsum
ngawang dawa	ngag dbang zla ba
ngawang döndrup	ngag dbang don grub
ngawang dragpa	ngag dbang grags pa
ngawang gyaltsen	*see* ngawang gyentsen
ngawang gyatso	ngag dbang rgyal mtsho
ngawang gyentsen	ngag dbang rgyal mtshan
ngawang jigme	ngag dbang 'jigs med
ngawang khechog	ngag dbang mkhas mchog
ngawang loden	ngag dbang blo gtan
ngawang losang trinley	ngag dbang blo bzang 'phrin las
ngawang namgye(l)	ngag dbang rnam rgyal

ngawang tenzin	ngag dbang bstan 'dzin
ngawang tragpa	ngag dbang grags pa
ngawang trinley	ngag dbang 'phrin las
norbhu döndup	*see* norbu döndrup
norbu döndrup	nor bu don grub
norbu dramdü	nor bu dgra 'dul
norbulinga	nor bu gling kha
norbu tsering	nor bu tshe ring
norbu wangye	nor bu dbang rgyal
nornang	nor nang
nortölinga	nor stod gling kha
nubling	nub gling
nyadang	nya dang
nyagtrü	nyag sprul
nyare	nya re
nyarong	nya rong
nyelungwa	gnyer lung ba
nyemo	snye mo
nyertsang	gnyer mtshang
nyi-a-sung	snying a song
nyican(la)	nyi lcang (lags)
nyima	nyi ma
nyingmapa	rnying ma pa
nyingpo	rnying po
nyungne lama	snyung gnas bla ma
ola ola	'o lags 'o lags
ondü shinga	'ong stod zhing kha
otshe otshe	'o tshe 'o tshe
pacö	pa lcogs
padnam	pad rnam
palden döndrup	dpal ldan don grub
panan	*see* padnam
panda (rapga)	spom mda' (rab dga')
pandatsang (yambe) (rimshi)	spom mda' tshang (ya 'phel) (rim bzhi)
pandenla	dpal ldan lags
patilinga	grwa ste gling kha
pawang	pa dbang
pebola	bal po lags
pecawa	dpe cha ba

pe(d)ma (chandra)	pad ma (chandra)
pema dorje	pad ma rdo rje
pemba (dzong)	spen pa (rdzong)
pena	*see* penam
penam	pa snam
penlop	dpon slob
phabongka (chantsö)	pha bong kha (phyags mdzod)
phagpa labrang	'phags pa bla brang
phala (sey)	pha lha (sras)
phangdong (latsenpa)	'phangs dong (las tshan pa)
phari	pha ri
phashi	pha gshis
phaship	bar ship
phawpon	phog dpon
phembo	phan po
pho lamrim	'phos lam rim
pholhane	pho lha nas
photrang depa	pho brang sde pa
photrang sarba	pho brang gsar pa
phugang	phu khang
phuja	phu phyag
phula	bu lags
phulama	bu bla ma
phulunga	phu lung pa
phungtsö	sbug mdzod
phungu phochen	bung gu pho chen
phünkang (jetrungla) (kung)	phun khang (rje drung lags) (gung)
phünrab(a)	phun rab (pa)
phüntso	phun tshogs
phuntsoling	phun tshogs gling
phüntso(g) tashi	phun tshogs bkra shis
phüntso wangye	phun tshogs dbang rgyal
phu panam	bu pad rnam
phurbucho (rimpoche)	phur bu lcog (rin po che)
phurchok (yongtsin) rimpoche	phur lcog (yongs 'dzin) rin po che
phurpu droma	phur bu sgrol ma
phusum pharwa	bu gsum bar ba
pitu khamtsen	spe thub khang mtshan
po	spo
pome	spo smad

porkyo(la)	spor kyog lags
potala	po ta la
poyul	spo yul
pu tobgye	bu stobs rgyas
rabden	*see* rabten
rabjun	rab byung
rabsel	rab gsal
rabten	rab brtan
ragashar	ra kha shag
ragra rimpoche	rag ra rin po che
ragyaba	rag rgyab pa
ralung	ra lung
ramba	ram pa
rame	ra smad
ramoche	ra mo che
rangda gyekab	rang bdag rgyal khab
rangkyong	rang skyong
rangsumdo	rang gsum mdo
rangwang	rang dbang
rapasasum	rwa spom sa gsum
rapga	rab dga'
rasa gyakhen	ra tsha rgya rgan
reba gyawu	ri pi rgya'u
reting (dzasa)	rwa sgreng (dza sag)
richi	ri spyi
rima	ri ma
rimpoch(h)e	rin po che
rimshi (surkhang)	rim bshi (zur khang)
rinchen dolma	rin chen sgrol ma
rinchen dorje	rin chen rdo rje
ringang	rin sgang
rinzin dorje	rin 'dzin rdo rje
riri	ril ril
ritrü	ri khrod
riwa dechen	ri ba bde chen
riwoche	ri bo che
riwo chöling	ri bo chos gling
riwo dechen	ri bo bde chen
rongbatse	rong ba rtse
rong namse	rong rnam sras

rong pelhün	rong dpal lhun
rongsum	rong gsum
rupön	ru dpon
rusu	ru zur
rutok	ru thog
sadam	sa dam
sakya	sa skya
salu	sa lu
salung (pa) (tsetop)	sa lung (pa) (tshe stobs)
salunga	*see* salung (pa)
samada	sa mda'
sambo (teiji) (sey) (rimshi)	bsam pho (tha'i ji) (sras) (rim bzhi)
samdong khamtsen	bsam gdong khang mtshan
samdra	bsam kra
samkharwa	bsam mkhar ba
samlinga	bsam gling ba
samlo (khamtsen)	bsam blo (khang mtshan)
sampo se	*see* sambo (sey)
sam se	*see* sambo (sey)
samye	bsam yas
sandutsang	sa 'dul tshang
sang	srang
sangnga chödzong	gsang sngags chos rdzong
satsig	sa tshig
sawangchemmo	sa dbang chen mo
saw depa (könchok)	sog sde pa (dkon mchog)
sebang	ser sbreng
se la	ze la
selunga	*see* salung (pa)
sem	sems
senang	sras nang
sendregasum	se 'bras dga' gsum
senriy	zan ril
sera	se ra
sera che	se ra byes
sera mey	se ra smad
sera utse	se ra dbu rtse
serkhang	ser khang
se(y)	sras

seynamba	sras rnam pa
shabten phashi	zhabs rten pha gzhis
shag	shag
shagappa	*see* shakabpa
shagaw (khembo)	shag skor (mkhan po)
shagche	shag chas
shagtsang	shag tshang
shakabpa	zhwa sgab pa
shamthab	sham thabs
shankawa	shan kha ba
shape	zhabs pad
shappe	*see* shape
sharcenchog	shar chen lcog
sharchang surpa	shag byang zur pa
sharpa chöje	shar pa chos rje
shartse	shar rtse
shasur	bzhad zur
shatra (ganden pencor)	bzhad sgra (dga' ldan dpal 'byor)
shekarling (pa) (ba)	shel dkar gling (pa)
shenggo	zhal ngo
sherab gyatso	shes rab rgya mtsho
sherpa	shar pa
shide (tratsang)	bzhi sde (grwa tshang)
shigatse	gzhis ka rtse
shingnyer	shing gnyer
shinga awala (lobsang gelek)	zhing sar a ba lags (blo bzang dge legs)
shinje tsheda	gshin rje tshe bdag
sho	zho
shobando	*see* shopando
shöga	zhol 'gag
shöl	zhol
sholkang	zhol khang
shöndrön	shod mgron
shopando	sho pa mdo
shotalhosum	sho rta lho gsum
shugden	shugs ldan
shugtrom	bzhugs sgrom
shuja	bzhugs bya
shukoba	shu bkod pa

shung	gzhung
shungden (dralha)	gzhung bstan (dgra lha)
shunglenba	gzhung len pa
shungshab	gzhung zhabs
silön	srid blon
simkang depa	gzim khang sde pa
simkangwaw	gzim khang 'og
simpön khembo	gzim dpon mkhan po
simpönla	gzim dpon lags
singga	gzim 'gag
sitshab	srid tshab
socong	gso sbyong
sogo lama	sog po bla ma
sogpo talama	sog po tā bla ma
sogya	bsod rgyal
sonam (chospel)	bsod nams (chos 'phel)
sonam dargye	bsod nams dar rgyas
sonam dorje	bsod nams rdo rje
sonam gombo	bsod nams mgon po
sonam gyatso	bsod nams rgya mtsho
sonam gyebo	bsod nams rgyal po
sonam leygung	so nam las khungs
sonam phüntso	bsod nams phun tshogs
sonam tashi	bsod rnams bkra' shis
sonam tobden	bsod nams stobs ldan
sonam wangchug	bsod nams dbang phyug
sonam wangdu	bsod nams dbang 'dus
song (rimpoche)	zong (rin po che)
söpön (chemmo) (shömba)	gsol dpon (chen mo) (gzhon pa)
sösimchösum	gsol gzim mchod gsum
sötopa	gsol thab pa
srongtsen gampo	srong btsan sgam po
sum	gsum
sungma	srung ma
surkhang (depon) (dz(s)asa)	zur khang (mda' dpon) (dza sag)
surkhang (wangchen gelek)	zur khang (dbang chen dge legs)
surse wangte	zur sras dbang bde
tadang	ta dang
tagam	zla gam

tago rame	dwags po ra smad
takali	tha ka li
takna	stag sna
takpo	dwags po
taktra (rimpoche)	stag brag (rin po che)
taktra ritrü	stag brag ri khrod
taktse(r) (rimpoche)	stag tsher (rin po che)
ta lama	tā bla ma
talam gongmo	rta lam gong ma
talung	stag lung
talungdra	stag lung brag
tamdrin	rta mgrin
tamtrin	*see* tamdrin
tanag	sta nag
taogao	*see* trogao
tapsang dramdul	zla bzang dgra 'dul
targang	tar khang
targye	dar rgyas
taring	phreng ring
tashi	bkra shis
tashi bera	bkra shis dpal ra
tashi döndrup	bkra shis don 'grub
tashikhil	bkra shis 'khyil
tashi lama	bkra shis bla ma
tashilhunpo	bkra shis lhun po
tashi lhumpo	*see* tashilhunpo
tashi tshondu	bkra' shis tshogs 'du
tawang	rta dbang
tawu khema	rta'u khal ma
teiji	tha'i ji
temba chönden	bstan pa chos ldan
temba chönten	*see* temba chönden
temba chungnay	bstan pa 'byung gnas
temba dargye	bstan pa dar rgyas
temba jayan	bstan pa 'jam dbyangs
tendar	bstan dar
tendong-nga	*see* trentong (nga)
tengyeling	bstan rgyas gling
tengyur	bstan 'gyur
tenkyong	bstan skyong

tensum	rten gsum
tenzin	bstan 'dzin
tenzin chömpel	bstan 'dzin chos 'phel
tenzin döndrup	bstan 'dzin don 'grub
tenzin gyatso	bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho
ter	gter
terlung	gter lung
tertön	gter ston
tethong	*see* trentong
thabten (phashi)	thab rten (pha gzhis)
thadang	tha dang
thangka	thang ka
thetong	*see* trentong
they ken trungtsi gudril	tha'i mkhan drung rtsis dgu sgril
thobten chupel	thub bstan chos 'phel
thondrup kapshopa	don sgrub ka shod pa
thowa memba	tha ru me 'bar
thowang thönden	mthong ba don ldan
thrabab	pra 'bab
thrapa lu	grwa pa lugs
thriba	khri pa
thrijey	khri mjal
thripa	khri pa
thri rimpoche	khri rin po che
thrisur	khri zur
thrompa	*see* thrumba
thromsikang	khrom gzigs khang
thrumba	grum pa
thubten (chömpel)	thub bstan (chos 'phel)
thubten dawa	thub bstan zla ba
thubten genden	thub bstan dge ldan
thubten gyalpo	*see* thubten gyepo
thubten gyatso	thub bstan rgya mtsho
thubten gyentsen	thub bstan rgyal mtshan
thubten gyepo	thub bstan rgyal po
thubten jampa tshütrim	thub bstan 'jam pa tshul khrims
thubten khenrab	thub bstan mkhyen rab
thubten kumbe	thub bstan kun 'phel
thubten künkyen	thub bstan kun mkhyen
thubten lengmön	thub bstan legs smon

thubten norbu	thub bstan nor bu
thubten norsang	thub bstan nor bzang
thubten nyima meru	thub bstan nyi ma sme ru
thubten nyingpo	thub bstan snying po
thubten rabyang	thub bstan rab dbyang
thubten ramyan	*see* thubten rabyang
thubten sampe	thub bstan bsam 'phel
thubten samphel	*see* thubten sampe
thubten sang (po) (bo)	thub bstan bzang po
thubten sanggye	thub bstan sangs rgyas
thubten sengge	thub bstan seng ge
thubten thuwang	thub bstan thub dbang
thubten tshenleg	thub bstan mtshan legs
thubten tsheten	thub bstan tshe rten
thukba	thug pa
thu(u)ri	gdug ri
thutob	thu stobs
tigcha	*see* tigica
tigica	te ge lcag
tigja	*see* tigica
tö	stod
töba (khempo)	stod pa (mkhan po)
tobgye	stobs rgyas
tongkor	stong 'khor
topgye	*see* tobgye
traja	grwa chags
tramnyen	sgra snyan
tranga	tram ka
trapchi	grab chi
trapchi lotrü laygung	grab chi glog 'phrul las khungs
tratsang	grwa tshang
trawu gongga	grwa 'og sku mkhar
traya(b)	brag goyab
trayde leygung	'phral sde las khungs
tregang	bkras khang
trentong (nga)	bkras mthong (ba)
treshong	bkra gshong
treten	khral rten
triblung	grib rlung
tricang (rimpoche)	khri byang (rin po che)

trimön	khri smon
trinley dorje	'phrin las rdo rje
trinley thargye	'phrin las dar rgyas
trisur (rimpoche)	khri zur (rin po che)
triu (khamba)	te hor (khams pa)
triu khamtsen	te hor khang mtshan
triu thrisur (chamba chodrak)	te hor khri zur (byams pa chos grags)
trogao	khro dga' ba
trogaw	*see* trogao
tromo	gro mo
trompa (dzasa)	*see* thrumba
trongdra	grong drag
trongtöba	'brang stod pa
trumba	*see* thrumba
trungchi	drung che
trunggo gyüma	drung 'khor rkyus ma
trungja	drung ja
trungtsi (gye)	drung rtsis (brgyad)
trunyang	krung dbyang
trunyichemmo	drung yig chen mo
trunyik chhempo	*see* trunyichemmo
tsadam	tsha 'dam
tsadrutsang	tsha sprul tshang
tsamba	rtsam pa
tsampa	*see* tsamba
tsamshe	rtsam bzhes
tsandri	tsha 'dri
tsang	gtsang
tsangpo	gtsang po
tsanyer	rtsa gnyer
tsarong (dzasa) (rimshi)	tsha rong (dza sag) (rim bzhi)
tsa serkhang	tsag gser khang
tsatora khencung	tsha tho ra mkhan chung
tsatsig	rtsa tshig
tse	rtse
tsechag	*see* tseja
tsedrön	*see* tsendrön
tsegag	rtse 'gag
tseja	rtse phyag
tselagang	rtse la sgang

tsendrön	rtse mgron
tsenya (rimpoche) (tulku)	btshan nya (rin po che) (sprul sku)
tsepon	*see* tsipön
tseri	rtse ri
tsering tobgye	tshe ring stobs rgyas
tsesum phünkang	tshes gsum phun khang
tsesumthang	tshes gsum thang
tsesum zenril	tshe gsung zan ril
tsetop	tshe stobs
tsewang (la)	tshe dbang (lags)
tsewang dondrup	tshe dbang don grub
tsewang dorje	tshe dbang rdo rje
tsewang rabten	tshe dbang rab rten
tseyang(la)	tshe dbyangs (lags)
tsha	tsha
tshaja	tsha phyag
tsha khamtsen	tsha ba khang mtshan
tshamtru rimpoche	tshams sprul rin po che
tshandri (godrö chey)	tsha 'dri (mgo sprod byed)
tshchag	*see* tshaja
tshechöling	tshe mchog gling
tsheden phüntso	tshe brtan phun tshogs
tsheden wangchug	tshe brtan dbang phyug
tshemöling	tshe smon gling
tshenyi	mtshan nyid
tshephel	tshe 'phel
tshesum phünkang	*see* tsesum phünkang
tshesung	tshe srung
tshetshog	rtse tshogs
tsheyog	tshe g.yog
tshögaw	mtsho sgo
tshogcen (shenggo)	tshogs chen (zhal ngo)
tshomöling	*see* tshemöling
tshondzin	'tsho 'dzin
tshongcö	tshogs mchod
tshongdu	tshogs 'du
tshongdu gyentsom	tshongs 'du rgyas 'dzom
tshongdu hragdu (gyeypa)	tshogs 'du hrag bsdus (rgyas pa)
tshongponla	tshong dpon lags
tshopa	tsho pa

tshultrim	*see* tshutrim
tshutrim (chömpel)	tshul khrims (chos 'phel)
tsichag	*see* tseja
tsidrung (beyba)	rtse drung (bal po)
tsidrung kunga	rtse drung kun dgar
tsigang	rtsis khang
tsipa (kabten)	rtsis pa (kab rten)
tsipön	rtsis dpon
tso chungwa	tsho chung ba
tso gnon-po	tsho sngon po
tsogo (or tsoko)	*see* tshögaw
tso karpo	tsho dkar po
tsöna dzong	mtsho sna rdzong
tsongdu	*see* tshong du
tsongkhapa	tsong kha pa
tsongsa penlop	rdzong gsar dpon slob
tsuglagang	gtsug lag khang
tsultrim (chömpel)	tshul khrim chos 'phel
tulku	sprul sku
ü	dbus
uchen	dbu chen
uchö	dbu chos
ula(g)	'u lag
umdze	dbu mdzad
urgyenla	dbu rgyan lags
urgyen namdol	dbu rgyan rnam grol
üshung	dbus gzhung
utse	dbu rtse
utugba	dbu gdug pa
walong	*see* walung
walung	wa lung
wanam	dbang rnam
wangchen gelek	dbang chen dge' legs
wangchug (gyebo) (tarchin)	dbang phyug (rgyal po) (dar chen)
wangdu (norbu)	dbang 'dus (nor bu)
yabshi (kung)	yab gzhis (gung)
yabshi phawpön	*see* phawpon
yak	g.yak
yambe	ya 'phel
yamen	ya smon

yancin	yang cin
yarso	dbyar gso
yatung	ya grong
yeshe chungney	ye shes 'byung gnas
yeshe dargye	*see* yeshe thargye
yeshe thargye	ye shes dar rgyas
yeshe thubten	ye shes thub bstan
yeshe tsultrim	ye shes tshul khrims
yeshe wangden	ye shes dbang ldan
yiggyur	yig 'gyur
yigtsang	yig tshang
yilung	yid lung
yöndag	yon bdag
yongdzin	yongs 'dzin
yongon (dzasa)	*see* yunggün
yudrug	g.yu phrug
yugye tashi dele	g.yul rgyal bkra' shis bde legs
yülha	yul lha
yunggün (talama)	yung dgon tā bla ma
yunghogün	yung ho dgon
yuthok (tashi döndrup)	g.yu thog (bkra shis don grub)
zeme trulku	ze smad sprul sku
zi	gzi

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